Vol 8 **The War Illustrated** No 195

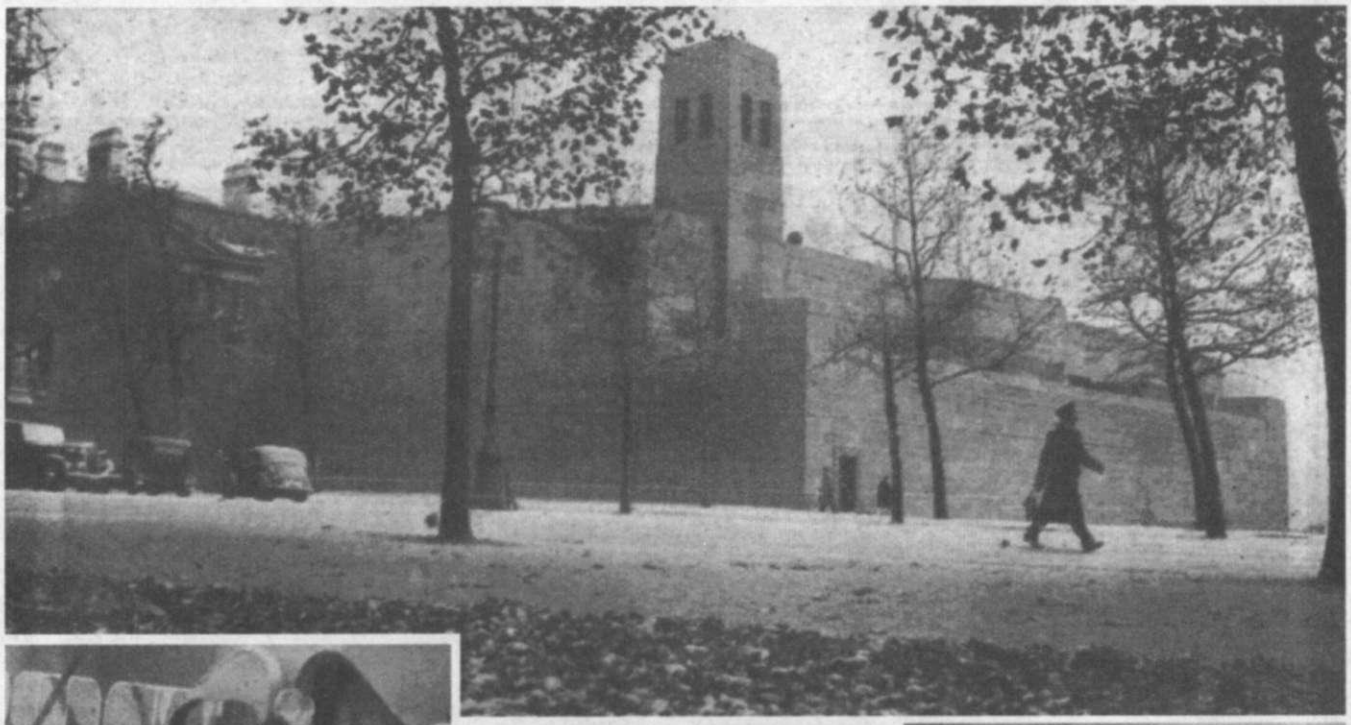
Edited by Sir John Hammerton

SIXPENCE DECEMBER 8, 1944

**IN THE WHEELHOUSE** of one of the landing-craft that braved the crippling fire from enemy shore batteries at Westkapelle on the island of Walcheren on November 1, 1944, the coxswain, Leading-Seaman Tony Cole, of Walthamstow, London, stands unflinchingly by the tiller. The final phase of the battle to free the sea approaches to Antwerp was thus begun, when at dawn Royal Marine Commandos battled their way landwards against German guns thought to have been silenced. **See pages 463-466.** *Photo, British Official*

NO. 196 WILL BE PUBLISHED FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22

# Our Roving Camera Records the London Scene



**"THE CITADEL,"** London's mystery war-building behind the Admiralty in Whitehall (above), photographs of which were released for the first time in November 1944. Its function was not disclosed.

**AIR HOSTESS,** Miss Millicent Curran, saw passengers aboard the DH 86 which, opening the air service between Croydon and Belfast, via Liverpool, made the first flight with civilians on November 13, 1944 (left).

**ANTI-INVASION DEFENCES** in London were being dismantled during November 1944. Pneumatic drills were used to demolish the pillbox (right) which commanded a strategic point on Chelsea Embankment.

**R.A.F. POLICE DOGS,** specially trained, have recently been used to locate buried London bomb-victims. "Thorn," an Alsatian, is seen on the trail (below, left).

**MEMBERS OF THE F.F.I.,** 200 young men and women arrived in London for a tour of Britain on November 14, 1944. They are seen dipping their flag in salute at a parade before the Cenotaph in Whitehall (below, right).

*Photos, Planet News, Central Press, Keystone, L.N.A.*

# THE BATTLE FRONTS

*by* Maj.-Gen. Sir Charles Gwynn, K.C.B., D.S.O.

THE freeing of the approaches to Antwerp (see illus. pages 463-466) marks the end of major operations preparatory to the great final offensive in the west. The enemy's outer defences have been disrupted and the Allied Armies fully deployed, and with secure and adequate bases behind are now within striking distance of his inner positions.

With the attack of the U.S. 9th Army, and the intensification of the preliminary attacks of the five other Allied armies which face east, the great final offensive has clearly actually begun, and there is no longer any question of its being postponed till after the winter, though we may have to wait till the spring or summer of next year for its conclusion. The attacks that have so far been delivered have evidently not aimed at a decisive break-through, but rather to drive in the German covering positions—as in Alsace and Lorraine—and in general to test and weaken the crust of German resistance.

Where General Eisenhower will eventually deliver his decisive blow is not yet apparent, and his final decision may depend on the strategy the Germans adopt. In Lorraine they may fall back fighting to the Siegfried position, and north of the Moselle they may withdraw behind the Rhine in order to avoid fighting a decisive battle with the river close behind them. General Eisenhower, by a premature attempt to gain decisive victory, might run the risk of committing his armies to a blow in the air, particularly since winter conditions militate against rapid pursuit.

WE may take justifiable pride in that the preparatory operations which have been so brilliantly successful were initiated and in the main carried out under the executive orders of a British general, and that troops of the Empire played an outstanding part in them.

Since the original landing and subsequent destruction of Rommel's Army there has been no success of strategic importance equal to the capture of Antwerp and the opening of the approaches to it. Moreover, it involved desperately hard and continuous fighting during a period in which the rest of the front was relatively quiet. I do not mean that the rest of the front was inactive, for pressure was vigorously maintained, but the enterprises undertaken, such as the capture of Aachen and the operations on the Moselle and Vosges fronts, had none of the urgency of those in Holland which had such an important effect on the "maintenance" situation on the whole front. The versatility displayed by the troops of the 21st Army Group and their capacity to adapt themselves to all sorts of conditions has been remarkable.

They have fought with equal determination and skill in the mud and cold of Holland as in summer heat and dust of Normandy. They have displayed immense energy in pursuit and in driving every advantage home, as well as dogged pertinacity in inching their way forward over terrible country in the face of fierce opposition. The number of amphibious operations they have staged testifies still further to their resourcefulness.

**HUNGARY** On the eastern front, Malinovsky's great offensive in Hungary continues to make remarkable progress in spite of the slowing down effect of autumn rains. But there is little doubt that the opening of the Russian main offensive is waiting for the winter conditions in which the superiority of Russian troops and equipment over their opponents' becomes most marked. The partial pause which has continued so long must, however, have allowed the Russians time to consolidate their system of communications and to complete their preparations, whereas such operations as have been undertaken have compelled the Germans to make drastic redisposition of their armies while still uncertain where they will have to meet the main blows. I have noted before now the patience the Russians display in developing their plans, which is as remarkable as the energy with which they strike when the chosen moment arrives.

**ALONG A 400-MILE FRONT, from near Arnhem to the Swiss border, six Allied armies—more than General Eisenhower had ever before sent into action at one time—were reported to have opened a mass-offensive against the Germans on November 16, 1944.**
*By courtesy of The Daily Mirror*

**PACIFIC** While we are waiting for the curtain to rise for the last act in the European theatre, we have an opportunity to take an interest in the reports that reach us from the Far Eastern theatre, where the first act is over and the second is in progress. Reports cannot, of course, give us as clear a picture of the setting of the stage in that theatre as we have of the western stage, but they do give us an idea of how the drama is unfolding and of the performance of the actors and their parts.

It has, perhaps, surprised us to learn that the actors supplied by the Empire have played such prominent roles. Australian troops conducted the greater part of the land fighting in New Guinea which not only, at Milne Bay, administered the first check to the aggressor's progress, but subsequently won the series of bases which made operations against the Philippines practicable. New Zealand troops took a distinguished part in the Solomons fighting. Ships of both the Royal Australian and New Zealand Navies have been actively engaged throughout; as has also been the R.A.A.F., which accomplished some wonderful work in New Guinea even when its equipment was wholly inadequate in quantity and obsolete in design.

New Zealand Divisions, as we know, are still, or were till recently, fighting in Italy, and though Australian Divisions were sent home from Egypt one at least remained to take part in Alamein. Twenty thousand Australian airmen and a proportionate number of New Zealanders are still in this country, as the Germans have good reason to know. Apart from that the Dominions have provided an essential base for the American war effort in the Western Pacific. They have been an invaluable source of food supply and, in addition (Australia especially) have developed war industries from scarcely nothing to an almost incredible standard of output and efficiency.

The great recovery and development of American naval and air power in the Pacific has tended to over-shadow the war efforts of the Dominions which, particularly in the earlier stages of the war, have been of such vital importance. Recently, Australian troops have been withdrawn for reorganization and re-equipment in readiness to take part in more exclusively Empire operations pending. Yet even in the recent Philippines operations the Royal Australian Navy and R.A.A.F. have rendered valuable service.

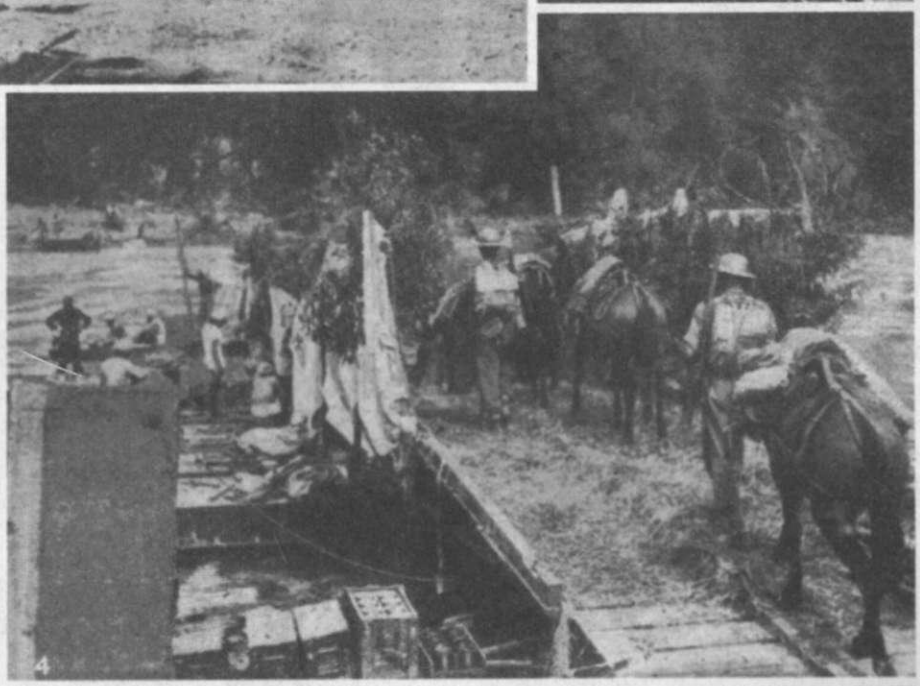
**BURMA** In Burma certainly the Empire's share in the Japanese war has been insufficiently recognized. I believe that the general impression is that the situation there has been rather unsatisfactory, relieved only by the spectacular and surprising success of the Chindit operations. Anything in the nature of an irregular enterprise always makes a special appeal to the British public, but it should be realized that amazing and admirable as the Chindits' exploits are they would have little military value except so far as they contribute to the success of the main army—just as Lawrence's exploits would have had little military significance if they had not been confirmed by Allenby's more decisive victories.

Actually the achievements of the 14th Army have been outstanding. It not only repelled a formidable and ambitious Japanese attempt to invade India and to cut the communications of General Stilwell's Chinese force, and of the airfields from which supplies to China are flown, but, by a counter-offensive, it inflicted on the Japanese Army the heaviest defeat it has ever sustained. The counter-offensive was delivered and pressed home in the monsoon season, during which it had previously been held that large-scale military operations must of necessity be suspended.

FURTHERMORE, operations took place in a terrain which it was widely believed would present an impassable barrier to large forces. Not only were the operations continued successfully throughout the monsoon season, but now at the beginning of the dry weather the 14th Army stands at the southern exits of the barrier. It is still true that with long and difficult lines of communication behind it the 14th Army cannot hope by its own exertions to effect the reconquest of Burma; but it has not only destroyed large Japanese forces but still exercises a threat which will compel the Japanese to weaken their hold on southern Burma, the security of which is essential to them.

In these operations Indian troops have played a glorious and conspicuous part, but it should be remembered that in every Indian Division at least 25 per cent of the combat units are British, and that exclusively British formations, as well as West and East African troops have endured the same hardships and have fought with equal distinction.

# Moving Eastward on a 300-Mile Front in Burma



**ALLIED FORCES** in North Burma, it was announced on November 17, 1944, held an almost unbroken front of 300 miles. Outside Tiddim, pushing on to Kennedy Peak and Fort White, a British tank moves along a mineswept road to the town (1); while a British scout watches Japanese draw out (5). Seeing for himself, Maj.-Gen. F. W. Festing, D.S.O., commanding the 36th Division, inspected a north-Burma outpost (3). In November his division achieved the most rapid advance ever made by Allied forces in Burma, moving down the railway corridor south from Myitkyina to Pinwe. Because these mules (4) were liable to panic on seeing the fast-running Manipur River, a camouflaged ferry was built for them. On the withdrawal of Gen. Joseph W. Stilwell from the command of U.S. forces in the China-Burma-India theatre (announced on October 28), Lieut.-Gen. Daniel I. Sultan (2) succeeded him in the Burma-India theatre. U.S. forces in China were placed under Maj.-Gen. Albert C. Wedemeyer.

(See map p. 473.)

*Photos, British and Indian Official*

# From Holland to the Reich the Big Push Goes On

**BRITISH TROOPS** of the 21st Army Group inspected a German A.A. gun used as an anti-tank weapon at Willemstad (above), on the Maas Estuary, after they had taken it on November 7, 1944. The town was seized in a blinding gale after the enemy had refused to surrender.

**DRIVING TOWARDS THE SAAR**, General Patton's U.S. 3rd Army—part of the great Allied six-army thrust—had completely surrounded Metz on November 19, 1944. Guns ploughed through thick mud (above), while convoys splashed along flooded roads (bottom right).

**TOMMY'S ODD JOBS** in Holland during the winter of 1944 included the removal to safety of many a homeless elderly Netherlander (above). Thousands were helped to transit centres by British Army authorities.
(See also illus. p. 461.)

# THE WAR AT SEA

*by* Francis E. McMurtrie

With the elimination of the Tirpitz, Germany has lost her last battleship. It is true that the Gneisenau still exists, but only as a dismantled hulk without armament, in dock at Gdynia. Two so-called "pocket battleships," the Admiral Scheer and Lützow, are in fact merely heavy cruisers, inferior in speed to the Prinz Eugen and Admiral Hipper, officially so classed. Two smaller cruisers, the Nürnberg and Leipzig, have not been heard of for some time past, but are believed, like the four ships previously mentioned, to be somewhere in the Baltic. There also are the two old coast defence ships Schlesien and Schleswig-Holstein, long overdue for scrapping, but capable of being used for bombardment purposes. Two small cruisers, the Köln and Emden, are reported to be in Oslo, where they have been employed as guardships and for training anti-aircraft guns' crews.

None of these ships is of sufficient force to detain in European waters any first-class ships of the Royal Navy which may have been held in readiness to deal with the Tirpitz so long as she remained afloat. Thus it should now be possible to release for service in the Eastern Fleet the majority of the more modern units of the Home Fleet. In fact, it may be assumed that, with a few exceptions, all the principal ships completed for the Navy during the present war will in due course be employed in the Pacific, operating against the Japanese.

This fact was tacitly admitted by Admiral Saalwaechter when, in disclosing that the Tirpitz had been "put out of action," he observed frankly but with little tact that the German Navy was "sorry" for the Japanese. It certainly would seem that the tremendous Allied naval force which it will now be possible to concentrate against our Eastern enemies should be sufficient to annihilate the Japanese fleet, already reduced to about half its original strength.

The Tirpitz can hardly be considered a lucky ship, in spite of the numerous attacks which she survived in the course of her brief but inglorious career. There were eight of these attacks prior to the final one which destroyed her :

(1) By Fleet Air Arm planes at Narvik in March 1942.
(2) By Halifaxes and Lancasters of the R.A.F. in Fotten Fjord, April 27, 1942.
(3) By a Soviet submarine in the Barents Sea, July 8, 1942.
(4) By H.M. midget submarines X6 and X7 in Altenfjord, September 22, 1943.
(5) By Fleet Air Arm planes (Barracudas) at Altenfjord, April 3, 1944.
(6) By Fleet Air Arm planes at Altenfjord between August 23, and 29, 1944.
(7) By Lancasters of the R.A.F. at Altenfjord, September 15, 1944.
(8) By Lancasters of the R.A.F. in Tromsö Fjord, October 29, 1944.

The amount of damage inflicted by attacks numbered 1, 2, 3, 6, and 8 is doubtful, owing to weather and smoke conditions preventing observation of results, but it is certain that in 4, 5 and 7 definite hits were made, resulting in more or less extensive damage. After the attack by midget submarines repairs were going on for some months, the underwater damage being patched up by the use of cement in large quantities. It seems probable that the cumulative effect of this and other damage must have gone far to weaken the structure of the ship below water.

### Varying Effects of Underwater Explosions on a Ship's Structure

In the attack by Lancasters on November 12, 1944, it is recorded that three 12,000-lb. bombs were seen to hit the battleship, while two others exploded near her in the water. It is quite likely that it was the latter which caused the ship to capsize, through a number of compartments being laid open to the sea, so upsetting the reserve of stability.

In a lecture delivered before the North East Coast Institution of Engineers recently, Sir Stanley Goodall, Assistant Controller (Warship Production) at the Admiralty, and formerly Director of Naval Construction, gave some interesting details of the effects on a ship's structure of underwater explosions.

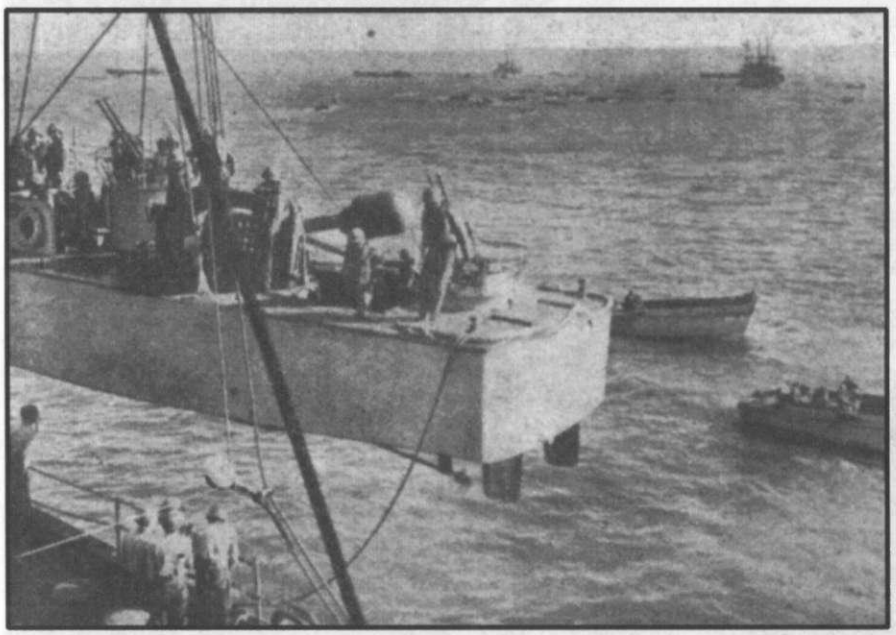
In view of the success with which depth charges had been used in anti-submarine operations in the last war, full-scale experiments were carried out in post-war years with the battleship Monarch, the monitor Gorgon, and other ships before they were sold for scrap. As a result of these experiments, it was demonstrated that the explosion of a non-contact charge in the neighbourhood of a ship's side would effect damage of less intensity than a contact charge, but the area of destruction would be greater. If, however, the charge was moved from the side round to the bottom, the intensity of the damage was increased, until right beneath the ship the effect was far more devastating than that of a similar weight of explosive in contact with the ship's side.

This may be summed up by saying that a charge exploding beneath a ship is more damaging than a torpedo which strikes her side ; and as a 12,000-lb. bomb contains a much heavier charge of explosive than a 21-in. torpedo, this damage would be further magnified should the former be detonated in such a position. Photographs which have been released of the sunken Tirpitz, lying half-submerged on her side, show two significant breaks in the keel line which may well have been due to bombs exploding beneath her in the way suggested. (See p. 477).

**H.M. THE KING** (left), on his visit to Portsmouth on November 16, 1944, inspected the underground plotting-room from which invasion operations on D-Day were controlled.

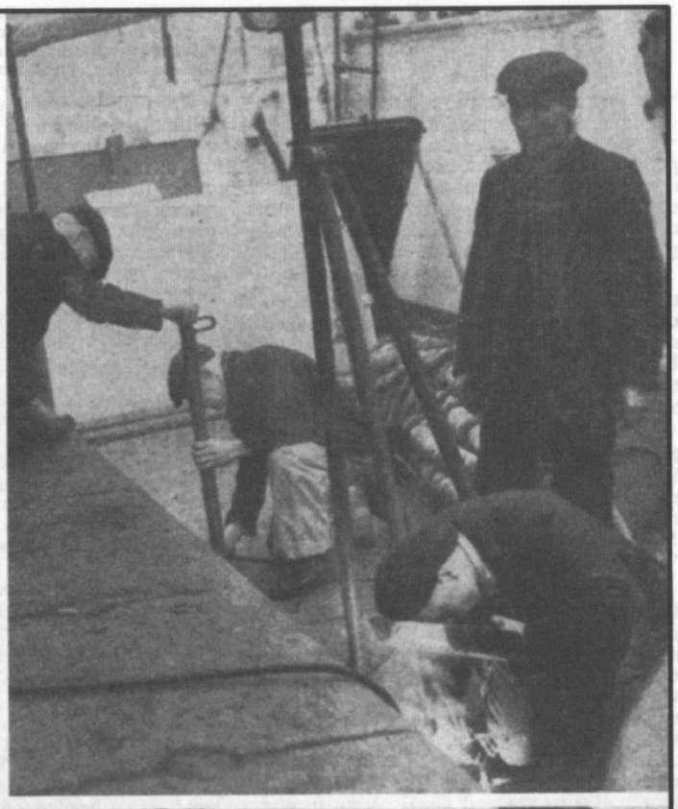
Launched at Wilhelmshaven on April 1, 1939, the Tirpitz was stated to be of 35,000 tons displacement, but in fact she is now known to have displaced about 45,000 tons, excluding fuel and reserve feed water. She mounted eight 15-in., twelve 5·9-in. and sixteen 4·1-in. guns, besides smaller anti-aircraft weapons. Four aircraft and a couple of catapults were included in the original design, but it seems improbable that these were actually carried, though the sister ship Bismarck is said to have had them when completed. That ship was manned by about 2,000 officers and men when she was sunk, but some of these are reported to have been supernumeraries, not forming part of the normal complement. Over 800 lives are believed to have been lost in the Tirpitz, according to Swedish accounts.

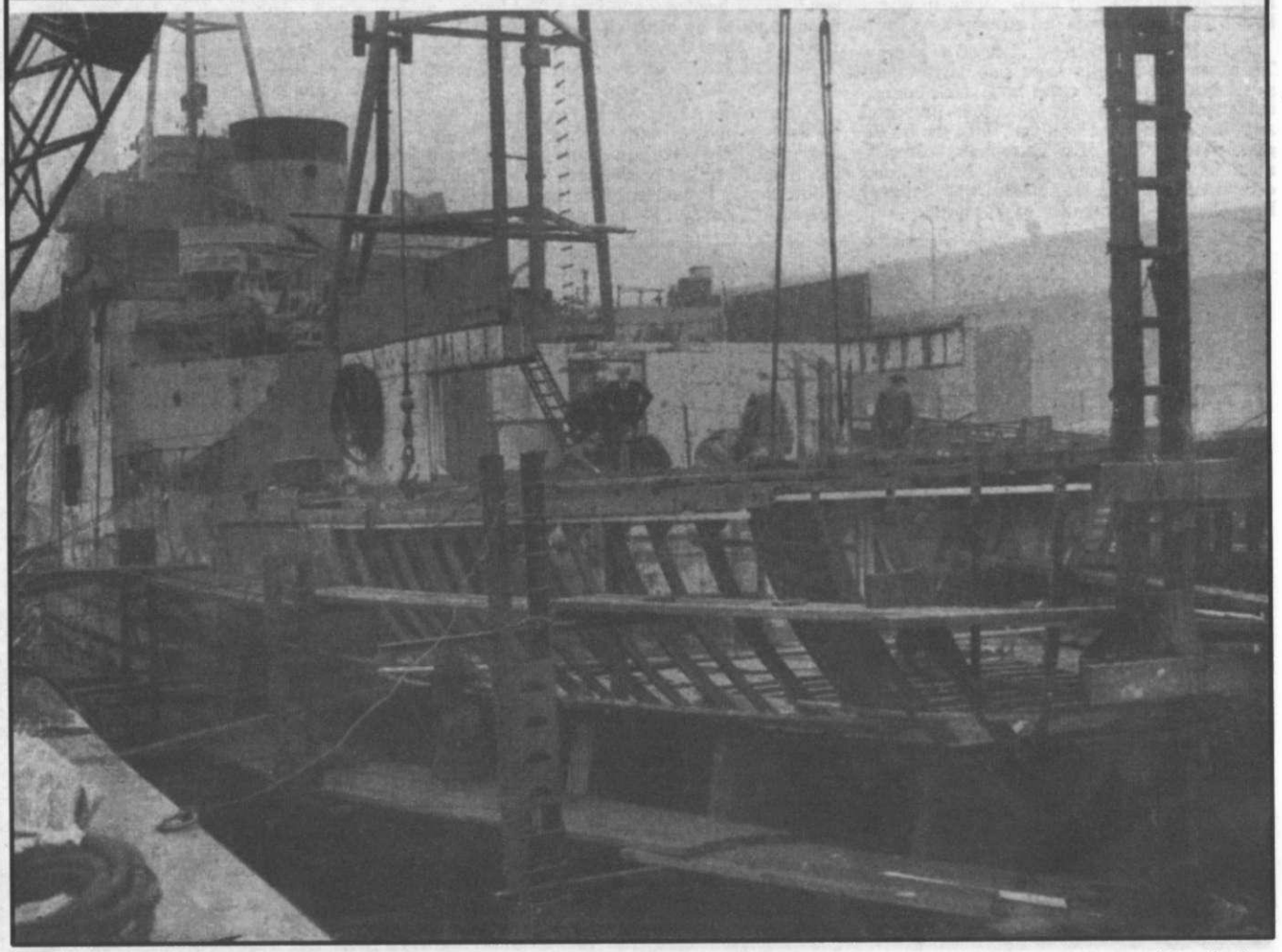
When the Bismarck was lost in May 1941, the Tirpitz had been finished, and had just proceeded from Wilhelmshaven to Kiel to carry out trials in the Baltic. After these had been completed, late in 1941 or early 1942, she seems to have been sent to Trondheim with a view to operating against Allied convoys proceeding to North Russia. In this service she accomplished very little, even when based on Altenfjord, far to the north. Her chief feat was to make a "tip and run" raid in company with other German warships upon the Arctic island group usually known as Spitsbergen, though its official Norwegian name is Svalbard ("Coldland"). (See illus. p. 315, Vol. 7.) The small Norwegian garrison was shelled and some of them taken prisoner, but otherwise nothing effective was accomplished in this sortie, which seems to have been undertaken for propaganda purposes rather than for any sound military reason.



**SMALL PROTECTION-CRAFT** of the U.S. Navy is lowered to the water from the deck of a transport (above) during the initial stages of General MacArthur's long-promised invasion of the Philippines on October 20, 1944 (see page 429). Well-armoured, and heavily-equipped with A.A. guns, these craft helped to protect the great transport vessels and landing barges seen heading for the shore in the background. *Photo, Planet News*

# They Help to Keep Our Merchant Fleet at Sea





**FOR EVERY BRITISH SHIP'S COMPANY AFLOAT** in 1944 as many men again were busy in the docks at home. Despite blackout, raids and other hindrances, 4,415,669 tons of merchant shipping were launched in the first four years of this war, compared with 3,770,170 tons in the four years of the last war, although fewer men and yards were available. Mr. J. F. Cunningham (top left), welder for 27 years, wields the oxy-acetylene torch in a Liverpool yard. Another bustling Liverpool scene (top right), and fitting a new stern to a vessel (bottom).



*Photos, British Official*

# With a Red Coastal Battery in the Far North

**Russian artillery has gathered great fame : the guns have been a chief factor in securing for Soviet forces resounding victories over the Germans on all parts of the long front. How renown came to one of the coastal batteries that hammered enemy shipping in the bleak and bitter Arctic is narrated here by Captain of the Coastal Service P. NIKOLAYEV. (See also facing page.)**

It was a light Arctic night in April 1943, and we were seated in a small dug-out for Marine scouts. Suddenly the window-panes rattled, a light breeze swept through and the distant booming of guns reached our ears. The Marines glanced at each other, and one of them, a short, stocky tommy-gunner, said : " It's Ponochevny ! "

I had heard that word "Ponochevny" mentioned many times. It was the name of one of the naval artillery officers, but I never realized that here in the Far North, on Sredni Peninsula, it stood for the coastal battery of the artillery battalion under the command of youthful Captain Fyodor Ponochevny.

We jumped from the dug-out. On the horizon, at a point closest to the sea, we saw bright flashes of fire. A deep glow fluttered over the place. Suddenly we heard an even more powerful roar of artillery, and the Marines stationed near the dug-out remarked: " That's him firing now."

Soon after I had occasion to visit the famous battery. Deserted, snow-covered hills sloped down towards the sea. Near the shore there was a sparse growth of midget birch trees typical of the Arctic. From there we had a view of the coast of Finland, enveloped in blue haze ; stretching along it were extinct volcanoes and snow-covered cliffs. The battery was stationed at the extreme edge of the right flank of the Soviet-German front covering sea and land. A stairway cut in the ice led towards the gun-post.

Actually, there was no sign of a battery. There was nothing in sight but narrow passages in the rocky ground and black embrasures among the rocks to indicate its presence. An officer in Marine uniform, with the frank, good-natured face of a Ukrainian, came to meet us. Two Orders of the Red Banner decorated his breast. This was Fyodor Ponochevny, commander of the battery.

Born in a whitewashed cottage of a Ukrainian village near Kiev, on the steep bank of the Dnieper, he had entered the Sebastopol naval artillery school at the age of 18 and after graduation had come to the north, where he had been serving for more than four years. Simple and cheerful, exceptionally exacting towards himself and his subordinates, he was liked by all the men of his battery. War is the best test of a man's character : such is Ponochevny's unwritten law, his basis of rating his people.

## The Test of a Good Artilleryman

The struggle of a coastal battery against the enemy's surface craft in conditions of the present war demands special precision and speed of action on the part of its personnel, ability to divine the enemy's tactics in good time and counter them by one's own tactics. Any number of enemy shells and bombs may burst all around, showering down thousands of red-hot fragments, but a real artilleryman must hear nothing, except the orders of his commander, must see nothing, except the sights of his gun. If he lives up to this, says Ponochevny, he is a good artilleryman and deserves every respect.

To prove his contention he named from among his crew, Gun Commander Gregory Khomyakov, a robust Marine ; Junior Sergeant Benjamin Koshelev, likewise a gun commander, a restless and lively lad ; the small, red-headed gun-layer Subbotin, a Sebastopolite by birth and a Kronstadter by service ; Sergeant Kovalkovsky, the best " joke-cracker " of the battery ; Leonid Kuznetsov, the cook, and others.

A dense fog obscured the bay. From time to time it merged with falling snow. Suddenly, a barely perceptible hooting was heard from the direction of the sea. The Marines stood tense listening. The sound was repeated. " Ready ! " The order was flashed to all the crew. Powerful searchlight beams were incapable of penetrating the dense fog. The men were at their posts, peering into the stereoscopes. They were waiting for orders.

The first salvos roared out. A solid wall of fire arose before the German ships.

Fire continued. Abruptly the wind tore apart and lifted the fog, and the searchlight illumined a big enemy transport. In a moment the transport became a flaming torch. A shell or two hit its centre, another hit was scored to starboard, and a bright glow rose over the bay. Artillerymen switched their fire to the second and third transports, which had not yet managed to vanish behind the bend.

This was a long and hard battle, but it ended in success. The infuriated enemy directed the full might of his coastal artillery against the battery and a heavy duel ensued. More than 300 shells were discharged at this battery, on this bright Arctic night. A tremendous figure ! But this was nothing new. On one occasion 872 shells were hurled against Ponochevny's battery. Eight long-range batteries opened up against it. Nevertheless, Ponochevny's battery survived and continued to sink enemy ships.

Shrapnel hissed overhead. Explosions broke communications, but signalmen rapidly repaired the damage and the artillerymen again and again responded to the orders of their commander. " Faster ! Train all the guns on the second transport ! " The second transport sank. The third went down in flames a few minutes later.

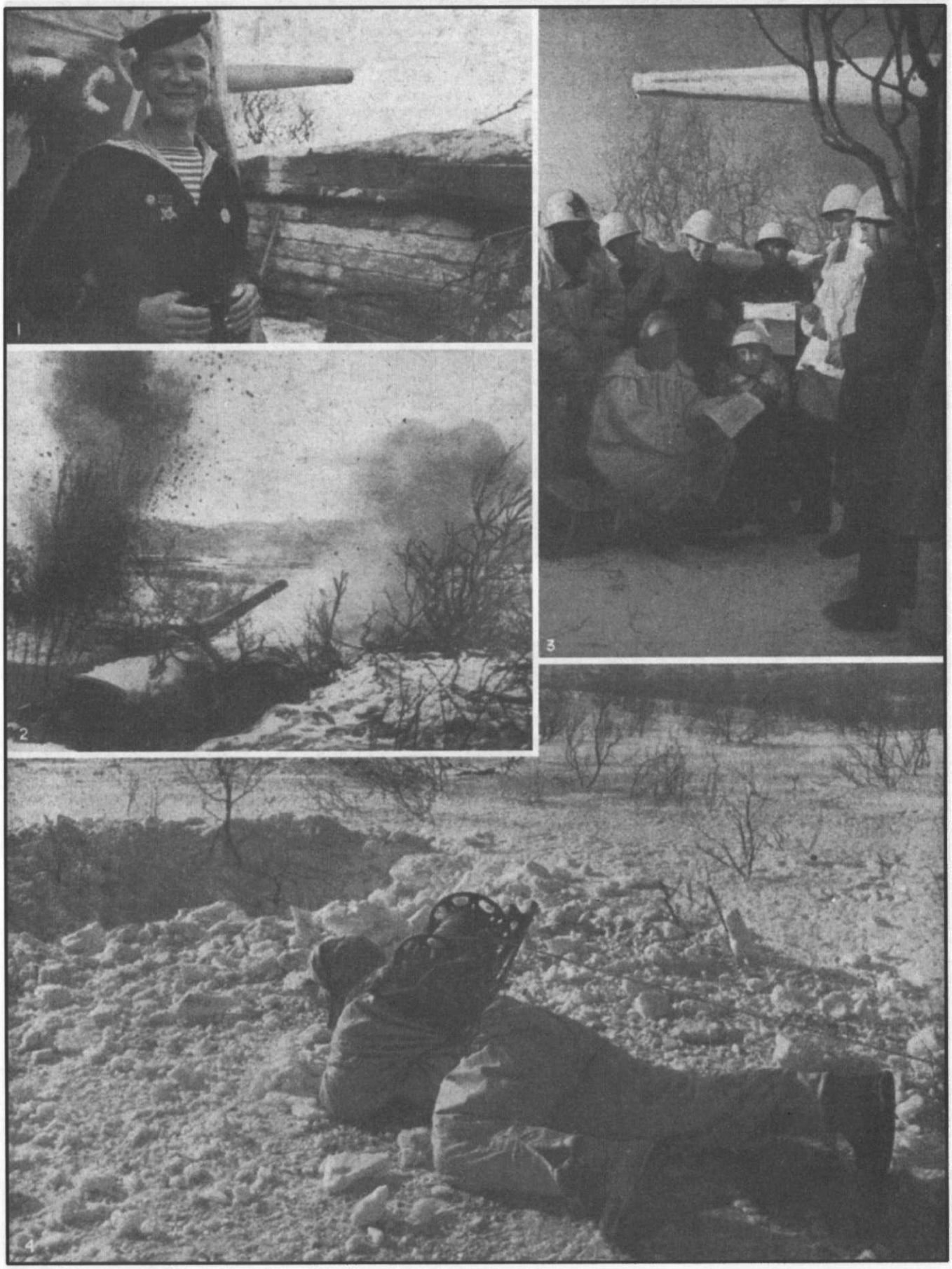
During this war Ponochevny's battery has sunk a total of 16 enemy transports and other ships, among them a big tanker, three trawlers, two patrol ships, and a big motorized barge. In addition, five enemy planes were shot down and an equal number damaged.

**LIKE A BEDOUIN OF THE SNOWS, this strangely-garbed Soviet Marine, N. Lebedev, stands on sentry duty in the frozen wastes of the far-north Russian frontier. He was one of the heroic coastal battery under the command of youthful Captain Fyodor Ponochevny, of the U.S.S.R. Karelian Command, whose exploits in destroying enemy transport and aircraft during a highly critical period of the war—a task demanding the utmost speed and precision—are related in this page.**



*Photo exclusive to* The War Illustrated

# Amidst Eternal Snows the Great Guns Roar

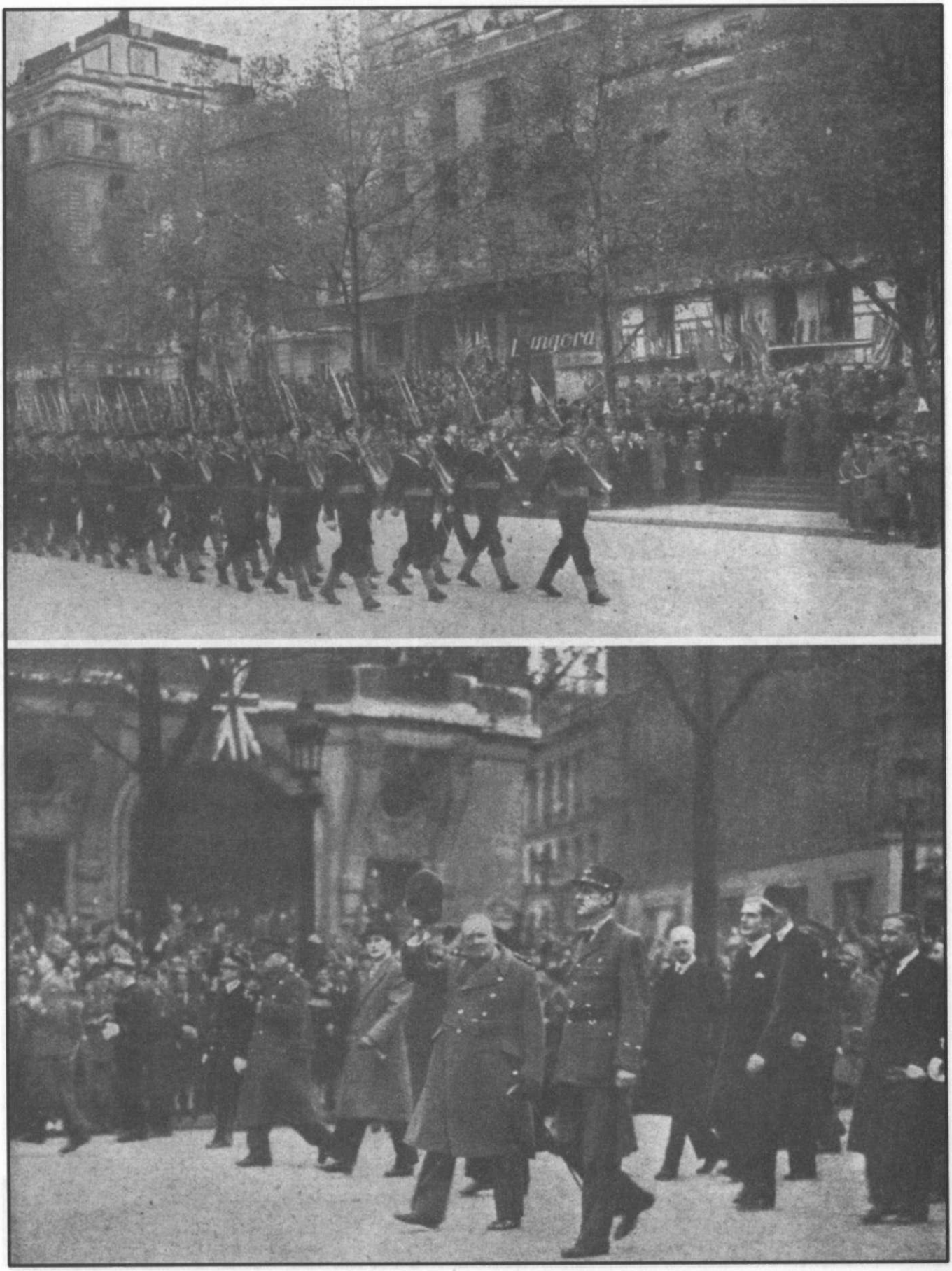


**IN THE ARCTIC WASTES** of the Sredni Peninsula, on the former Russo-Finnish frontier, a lonely outpost of Soviet Marines—the "Red Banner Battery," commanded by Captain Ponochevny—carried out an epic task harassing enemy transport during the critical winter of 1943 (see facing page). The smiling, bemedalled gun-commander, Sergeant Koshelev (1). Ponochevny's guns crash out (2). The battery read the newspapers (3). Crawling across the snow under fire, Signalman Pankov repairs communications (4).



*Photos, Exclusive to* THE WAR ILLUSTRATED

# 'Vive Churchill!' Cried 100,000 Parisians



ON ARMISTICE DAY, 1944, the Prime Minister paid a surprise visit to the French capital. He laid a wreath on the Unknown Warrior's tomb and took the salute with General de Gaulle at a gigantic military parade in the Champs Elysées. Ratings from the Chatham Naval Gunnery School headed the British contingent (top). Mr. Churchill, in the uniform of an Air Commodore, waved to the cheering crowds (bottom). This was the Premier's first visit to Paris since the Battle of France in 1940. He returned to England on Nov. 14.



*Photos, British Newspaper Pool*

# New Glory for the Guards in the Battle of Italy

GRENADIER GUARDS WITH THE 5th ARMY in Italy took full share of the arduous fighting in the Apennines in November 1944. Earlier in the Italian campaign, from Cassino to the Gothic Line, they won new laurels by covering 315 miles in 108 days of bitter battle and great hardship. A patrol of the Grenadiers is here seen making a steep climb along a rock-strewn mountain track to forward positions in the Central Apennines. Late in November snow had fallen all along the front. See also illus. pages 688-689. Vol. 7.

*Photo, British Official*

# The Story Behind a Polish Armoured Brigade

From all over the world, and in spite of immense difficulties, Poles have rallied, first in France and later in Britain, to fight for the liberation of their country. In this article HENRY BAERLEIN tells of the history and the adventures of the personnel of a Polish Armoured Brigade he recently visited and which is now in the fighting line

THERE was a time during the last war when Poles, wearing German, Austrian and Russian uniforms, were fighting against one another. But although they had been forced to participate in various theatres of war their leaders saw to it that none of them entered into binding agreements with any one of the warring Powers who tried their utmost to win the Poles' allegiance for their own imperialistic aims. The attitude of the Polish Legion, formed and led by Marshal Pilsudski, is proof not only of the strong nationalistic sentiment of the Poles, which 150 years of slavery could not extinguish, but also of their refusal to co-operate in any policy which was directed against the interest of Poland.

The Marshal had been successfully fighting the Russians when he realized that the promises which the German and Austrian Governments had made regarding the independence of Poland were unreliable. He immediately refused to obey all further orders, and as a result both he and the whole Polish Legion were imprisoned by the Germans.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, before the partition of Poland, one of the most notable features of her army was the cavalry. The horsemen wore breastplates, and fixed to their shoulders they carried lofty contraptions made of eagles' feathers. As the horsemen charged, the wind rushed through these plumes and caused a terrifying noise which was intended to break the morale of the enemy. (It will be recalled that military bands have their origin in the music played by the Arabs when going into battle; the idea was not so much to encourage their own side as to terrify the foe.)

THIS eagle-feathered cavalry is the ancestor of the tank, and a visit I have just been privileged to pay to one Polish Armoured Brigade has been highly instructive. Officers and men were delighted with their new, fast-moving cruiser-type tanks made in Britain or America. These tanks are much more heavily armed than the Crusaders which they had a year or so ago, and are more easily controlled; though the Crusader is simple enough to handle, as I discovered when, after riding in one up and down a mountain-side, our driver showed us that he had done all the driving with his left hand, as his right was bandaged because of a recent injury.

The cavalry regiment—the predecessor of this particular armoured unit was entirely motorized in 1939. From the first day of the war it faced the overwhelming strength of the German Panzer Divisions on the southern front. Heavy clashes occurred at many places, and near Lvov the German 1st Highland Division was encircled and wiped out. When Poland was overrun by the enemy the regiment, reaching France by various routes, gave a splendid account of itself. Later, though somewhat depleted in numbers, it proceeded south, determined to reach Britain. Here, from 1940 to 1942, it formed an integral part of the coastal defence of Scotland, and has since received the singular honour of being presented with a marching flag by the Ancient Royal Burgh of Haddington. Units stationed in Lanarkshire wear on their sleeve the Duke of Hamilton's tartan. These are emblems profoundly treasured by the Poles.

## Gamekeepers Turned Snipers

There is something else that is treasured by these men—a rifle fitted with telescopic sights, with the help of which a good shot can scarcely miss his target. An officer told me how his gunsmith in the south of Poland had informed him of a Mauser made in Germany and suitable for Polish army ammunition, but which could be bought only in Danzig. He managed to obtain one five or six days before the outbreak of the war; and now he has been training snipers whose rifles are furnished with these sights. His men are sportsmen like himself, and hail mostly from the Carpathians, where some had been gamekeepers and others poachers.

It is sometimes asserted that the Poles are not a democratically-minded people. But while on my visit I came across two men who were engaged in conversation: one a sergeant, the other a private. The sergeant had been head of a great petroleum company, while the private, a young man whose mother had been a Habsburg, belonged to one of the most ancient of Poland's noble families. He seemed to be quite happy, and I was told that he was never excused any of the toil that ordinarily falls to a private's lot.

GENERAL MACZEK, G.O.C. 1st Polish Armoured Division, paid a front-line visit to Field-Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery during the Netherlands campaign in November 1944. The General (facing camera) is seen presenting one of his staff to the Field-Marshal
*Photo, British Official*

The Poles have flocked to their standards from all over the world. One man whom I met, for instance, had been smuggled, together with four friends, into a Latvian ship and concealed under the boilers. The Germans took the ship to Stettin, where it remained for three weeks, during which time a sailor brought the fugitives food and water. But the suspicious Germans used tear-gas, which caused one of the Poles to go mad, and the others had to restrain him lest he should "give the show away." Occasionally, at night, the Poles would venture on deck. They escaped from the vessel when she docked at Antwerp.

A NON-COMMISSIONED Pole, a lawyer in civil life, whom I also met in this brigade, had reached Hungary when his own country fell into German hands. He then went to France, where he served as a private in the artillery and, after the collapse of that country, he was interned for a considerable time in Switzerland. Escapes need not always be romantic, and his took place in broad daylight when he strolled across the frontier. He contacted some fellow-countrymen at Marseilles and ascertained that ships were being sent to Beyrout to evacuate those Frenchmen who preferred to come home rather than join De Gaulle. Ten thousand francs quickly changed hands—one of the recipients was a seaman on board such a ship—and on a dark night the Poles were rowed to the far side of the vessel and embarked in secrecy.

## "Sir, I Can Tell You Nothing!"

For seven days and nights they lived in the dark, subsisting entirely on scraps that the seaman could save from his own rations. Divided among five men it did not go far and my informant lost a good deal in weight. At Beyrout an Australian officer put no difficulties in the way of the travellers, and the captain of the ship, which, as it happened, had taken the Polish brigade, or part of it, to Narvik some eighteen months previously, said that he would permit them to land on condition that they disclosed how they had arrived on board and who had assisted them.

"Sir," said my informant, "this is the worst moment of my life—for I can tell you nothing!" Thereupon the captain saluted and let them go ashore. The Poles infected the captain's crew. Fourteen of them also went ashore and joined the Fighting French forces of General de Gaulle!

POLISH MILITARY POLICEMAN directs British troops aboard a jeep at Barle Nassau on the Breda-Tilburg front in the Netherlands, where the Poles fought side by side with men of the 1st Canadian Army. This photograph was taken after the Poles, in a hard-pressed struggle, had captured Alphen and Gilza on October 27, 1944, and were moving towards Breda. Later they broke the enemy resistance at Moerdijk. *Photo, Keystone*

# How We Heartened the Homeless in Holland

**AFTERMATH** of the great Allied airborne landings at Nijmegen and elsewhere in the Rhine delta of Holland on Sept. 17, 1944, was the succouring of thousands of refugees. Within four days of the landings, Nijmegen, on the River Waal, southern arm of the Rhine and about four miles from the German frontier, was in Allied hands. Its 2,000-yards bridge, taken intact, secured to our troops one of the main objectives of the airborne invasion. See also pages 366-370.

**A BRITISH** army lorry was one of many boarded by Nijmegen refugees on the way to safety (1). The language of signs came in handy when boy (Canadian trooper) met girl (Dutch, in national costume) outside the town (2). Hot soup was distributed from milk-churns to sabot-shod homeless (3). Against the background of Nijmegen's medieval church, two aged refugees sought information from an Allied soldier in charge of transport (4). Enjoying a much-needed rest, these old Dutch women were housed and tended by nuns in a converted stocking factory (5).

*Photos exclusive to* THE WAR ILLUSTRATED

# Catafighters of the Atlantic Suicide Squad

One of the least-known of the many duties the Hurricane was called on to perform is described by Sgt. A. J. WILSON, R.A.F. Production of this famous aircraft has now ceased. But in the ranks of the Merchant Navy and among the crews of many Naval escort vessels the Hurricane Catafighters will long be remembered for "services rendered." See also page 214.

THE idea came from the Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill. Like most good plans it was simple and direct. In 1941, out in the Atlantic, far beyond the reach of shore-based aircraft of Fighter Command, German long-range bombers were preying on our convoys. We could not spare aircraft carriers to give them protection, and only the guns of the escort ships of the Royal Navy guarded the merchantmen which brought us vital supplies.

The big four-engined Focke-Wulf Condors and Kuriers operated without fear of fighter interference over our convoy routes, sometimes hundreds of miles from their bases in western France. Then came Mr. Churchill's plan. Briefly it was this: Fit out some of our merchant ships with catapult launching apparatus and place aboard them the most suitable fighter which can be rocketed from their decks. When attack threatens, launch the fighter and even if the pilot does not destroy the enemy he will probably save the convoy from attack. The pilot can then take to his parachute and be picked up by the naval escort.

Practical experiments followed. It was not difficult to decide on which aircraft to use. The Hurricane, Britain's most versatile fighter, which has been employed in a dozen different types of operations, was the obvious choice. And one day in May 1941 a small party of pioneers arrived at an airfield on the west coast of England to form what later became known as the Merchant Ship Fighter Unit.

A WING Commander from Coastal Command and a few other officers and airmen, including a Signals Officer from Fighter Command, comprised the party. One room in a hut was their headquarters, and they raided equipment from the airfield's station headquarters to fit it out. They partitioned their room into two; on one side was the Commanding Officer's office and signals office, and on the other side was the orderly-room, stores, accounts and everything else rolled into one.

When the first two Hurricanes arrived a few days later the Signals Officer took off his tunic and personally fitted the radio equipment. After several days of hard work the big moment came—a trial launching from a ship in port. The pioneers watched anxiously as the pilot gave the signal for the launching rockets to be fired. A few moments later they were cheering as the Hurricane circled above them.

The ships selected as the first M.S.F.U. vessels were equipped with a 30-yards steel runway, along which a trolly, carrying the aircraft, was forced at high speed by exploding rockets. At the end of the runway were hydraulic buffers, and when the trolly struck these the Hurricane was thrown forward into the air. With the Hurricane's engine roaring at open throttle, the explosions of the rockets, and the whole aircraft enveloped in smoke and flame, it looked like death for the pilot. But the din would only last a few seconds and there would be the Hurricane soaring gracefully and only the smell of cordite left to linger about the ship and the bos'n hosing the decks to extinguish the flames.

The first batch of pilots were all volunteers. Most of them were Battle of Britain "veterans" and knew all the tricks of operational flying. They knew, too, that at the end of each combat there was the prospect of an extremely cold ducking in a choppy sea. Jokingly they called themselves the "Atlantic Suicide Squad." They knew that at any time the fate of the convoy might be thrust into their hands, just as the fate of Britain had been their responsibility some months earlier. They accepted the perils, and off they sailed to meet the enemy.

WITH each went a small R.A.F. maintenance crew—a fitter, rigger, armourer and radio operator. The Navy provided the Fighter Directing Officer, whose job corresponded with that of a controller in a land-based operations room. From the moment the aircraft was launched, he would be in radio-telephone touch with the pilot and direct him to his target; he would advise him when and where to bale out and arrange for his speedy rescue. The big experiment was on. The heads of three Services waited hopefully for results.

**FLIGHT-LIEUT. A. H. BURR, D.F.C., of London, who flew 240 miles over Arctic seas in a determined effort to save his Hurricane, after one of the fiercest air-battles ever fought over a Russia-bound convoy, as narrated in this page.** *Photo, British Official*

Twelve months later, when the M.S.F.U. celebrated its first birthday, it was reported that not one merchant ship had been lost through long-range bombing on normal ocean routes when a catafighter had been in the convoy. Cover had been extended from the Atlantic to the Arctic, and the small band of pioneers who had launched the scheme had grown into a strong independent fighting unit with pilots in Canada and Russia.

THIS did not mean that all Condors and Kuriers had been shot out of the sky. The deterrent effect on the enemy was perhaps more significant than the combat results. When a raider knew that if he attempted to attack he would have a Hurricane on his tail, he generally left the ships alone and sought easier prey. But for all that the catafighters saw plenty of action.

One November morning, an enemy aircraft was seen flying astern of a convoy homeward-bound from Gibraltar. It was only a matter of seconds before Flying Officer Norman Taylor, 22-year-old Battle of Britain pilot, of Kenilworth, Warwickshire, was signalling to the ship's chief officer to rocket him into the air.

Brilliant sunshine threw up a dazzling glare from the sea, and at first Taylor could see no sign of the enemy. Then he spotted the raider—a four-engined Condor, flying so low that to Taylor it almost seemed to be following the contours of the swell. The German pilot pulled on his control column as the Hurricane approached, intending to climb for cloud cover. He was too late. There was a quick exchange of bullets and the huge enemy aircraft dived straight into the sea, leaving only its tail sticking upright out of the water.

Taylor patrolled for another twenty minutes in case the Condor had friends. Then his Fighter Directing Officer heard his voice come crackling over the radio-telephone: "Good God! I've been hit in the port wing, right through the bull's-eye of the roundel!"

HE baled out soon after that, and after hitting the water on his back had trouble in releasing his dinghy. The sea buffeted him so much that after ten minutes he gave up trying. When later he wrote his combat report he told in detail of his struggle in the water, explaining blandly that he was in rather a fix as he was a non-swimmer! Taylor won the D.F.C. for that action, and from the captain of his ship came the comment: "He saved the convoy a bad time and possible disaster to some of its ships."

A few months later, on the same route, two F.W. Kuriers, aircraft as big as our heaviest bombers, were shot down in one evening by two catafighter pilots. Flying Officer J. A. Stewart, of Glasgow, faced the enemy's heavy fire-power at point-blank range as he closed to pour a burst into the cockpit of the first Kurier. The flash which followed was seen by a warship ten miles away. Fierce return fire from the second Kurier was also met by Flying Officer P. J. R. Flynn, a London pilot, who was catapulted from another ship. It was not before his Hurricane's port wing had been badly holed and the panel smashed behind his head that he fired the burst which destroyed the enemy.

NOT all the catafighters lost their Hurricanes. After shooting down two German bombers in one of the fiercest air battles ever fought over a Russia-bound convoy, Flight-Lieut. A. H. Burr, of London, flew 240 miles over Arctic seas in a determined effort to save his aircraft. The convoy had already been attacked by two waves of enemy aircraft before he was catapulted from his ship, and in one of these attacks the launching crew had to repair the electrical installation and they went calmly about their task with bombs falling all around them.

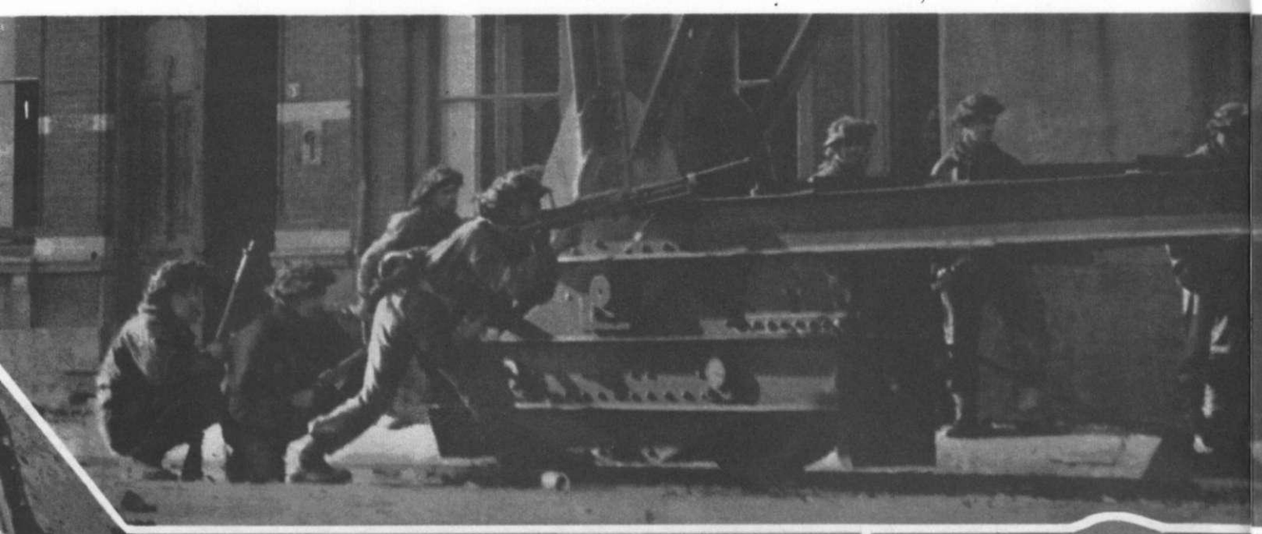
The torpedo-carrying Heinkels swept in to attack, and Burr was shot off to intercept. He sent one down in flames, another swerved and crashed into the sea; the remainder released their torpedoes too soon, with the result that not one of the ships was hit. Burr checked his petrol and radioed his ship. He had enough for about an hour's flying; the nearest Russian airfield was 240 miles away. He decided to try to reach it. When he landed there were five gallons of petrol in his tanks—for about seven minutes flying.

Last spring, after two and a half years' service, the ships of the M.S.F.U. made their last voyage. The big steel runways were dismantled, the Hurricanes unloaded and the pilots and maintenance crews sent to other units. In their place came the "Woolworth" carriers (see illus. page 104, Vol. 7), miniature aircraft carriers whose pilots have since done good work with our convoys.

*Photos, British Official*

## *At Westkapelle the Royal Marines Went in at Dawn*

Enemy batteries on Walcheren, at the mouth of the West Scheldt, had contrived to survive heavy bombardment when British Marine Commandos invaded the westernmost point of the island on November 1, 1944. Most gloriously achieved, but attended with grievous loss, our object was to clear the approach to the Belgian port of Antwerp. From L.C.T.s (bottom) Marines plunged inland through withering fire. Survivors swam ashore from craft that had capsized (top).



## *Triumphant Commandos Fought to Link up with—*

Subduing enemy batteries in furious battles as they advanced, one body of British troops moved southwards to Flushing, whose liberation was completed two days after the landing at Westkapelle. Snipers concealed in the docks were picked off one by one by our men from behind scanty cover (1). Dutch Commandos took part in this attack; they are seen (2) marching along the waterfront. From the south of Flushing, Allied wounded were evacuated in amphibious Buffaloes (3).

*Photos, P.N.A., Associated Press, New York Times Photos*

## *—Comrades Who Meantime had Landed at Flushing*

Manhandling their gun to a landing craft at Breskens, on the mainland south of the Scheldt, other British Commandos (4) prepared for the short crossing to the Flushing beach-head. Two hundred ships of all sizes took part in the bloody landings on Walcheren, directed by Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay, Allied Naval C.-in-C., who is seen (5) talking to Marines who manned the landing craft (6). With the successful link-up of invading forces the mouth of the Scheldt was finally cleared.

## Through the Bomb-Blasted Sea Wall of Walcheren

*Photos, British Official, Associated Press*

The great gap torn by the R.A.F. in the dike which had prevented the sea from submerging the island formed a perilous gateway for invasion. The bombers' work is being inspected (top, left to right) by Lieut. K. G. Wright, of Sussex, L/Cpl. H. Lindley, of Yorkshire, and an unidentified commando. Landing from an L.C.T., a flail tank (bottom) will beat the earth with its chains to detonate enemy mines as it splashes through the flood-water that now covers four-fifths of Walcheren.

# VIEWS & REVIEWS

Of Vital War Books

*by* Hamilton Fyfe

I WONDER if other people find, as I do, that books about naval warfare seem so much less attractive than accounts of land fighting, or even fighting in the air—though there is little variety about these latter, all sky warfare being largely the same. What can the reason be?

Partly it is, I think, because ships when they are engaged in battle are such a long way apart from one another. Effort has to be made by the reader to follow a writer's description of their complicated manoeuvres. So often nothing seems to happen. When vessels are firing at unseen targets miles away, it is hard for anyone who has not taken part in a naval engagement to visualize the ups and downs of the fight. Added to this is the unfortunate fact that naval authors, though they may be thoroughly well acquainted with their subject, are too often not very interesting writers.

I have just finished reading a book called Under Cunningham's Command (Allen and Unwin, 8s. 6d.). It is about the operations in the Mediterranean up to fifteen months ago. These operations were not only of the greatest importance to the cause of the United Nations; they were of the most varied and often most exciting character. Yet Commander George Stitt's story of them reads like an official report to be laid only before persons whose business it is to learn what occurred. No doubt they would absorb this accurately from Commander Stitt's pages, but the interest of the occurrences for the general public has to be excavated with some pains.

He describes, of course, all the actions already famous—the Battle of Matapan, the attack on Taranto, the Battle of Crete, the supplying of Tobruk, and so on. There is nothing much new in these, except perhaps the light thrown on the dislike of Italian crews for fighting. When the Italian cruiser Pola was captured after putting up no resistance to speak of, one of the prisoners was asked why that was. He said, "Well, you see, we thought that if we opened fire on you, you would sink us." On the upper deck many of the seamen were half drunk; the whole place was littered with bottles, clothing and rubbish.

ANOTHER episode showing the lax state of discipline in the Italian Navy was the action of a Yeoman of Signals in a vessel that was attacked suddenly without warning. "On seeing and hearing explosions all round him, he made the Sign of the Cross, invoked all the saints he knew, and jumped overboard." There were many stories similar to his. One of them concerned the admiral whose flagship it was. "He is believed to have jumped overboard without a lifebelt."

We do not often hear of submarines attacking one another. They don't often have the chance. And when they do they are more frequently than not prevented from taking advantage of it by the state of the sea. But not always. One day the officer of the watch in our submarine Parthian sighted through her periscope, which was all she had above water, a long, low object on the surface, about three or four miles away. It was coming towards them. It was an Italian submarine. There was a heavy swell and a choppy sea, so the commander of Parthian waited till the enemy came close. At 400 yards' range he fired four torpedoes and blew her up.

Just after she sank, his own vessel was shaken by a violent explosion. This had been caused, it was thought, by something detonating in the wreck under water. Next day, offshore from Tobruk again, another long, low object was spotted through the periscope. Another enemy submarine? Must be. Very carefully Parthian was manoeuvred back and forth until at last she was in an ideal position to fire. All was ready for the discharge. Then, with a gesture of disgust, the commander turned away from the periscope. What he had thought was an enemy submarine had revealed itself as a long, low building on a spit of sand.

# A Diversity of Naval Occasions

The work the Royal Navy did during the disastrous attempts to occupy Greece and later to establish ourselves on Crete would have been immensely valuable if these operations had had any chance of success. As it was, that work mitigated the disasters. The soldiers knew the Fleet would do everything possible. When the brigadier in command at Kalamata, where evacuation was going on, decided that he had better surrender instead of letting his troops be annihilated, many of them made off down the coast, sure that the Navy would not let them down. It did not. At night destroyers patrolled all the time, picking up men who had left the shore in Greek caiques and taking others off lonely beaches where they waited "in blind faith that they would be rescued." Their faith was not misplaced.

HISTORIANS will discuss in the future whether those Greek and Cretan forlorn hope adventures were justified. Those who defend them say with Commander Stitt that political and moral considerations must sometimes in war outweigh the purely military. I do not myself agree with that view. I hold that those are right who say we should have told the Greeks it was impossible to help them at the moment. We should have concentrated on hitting the enemy where we could hurt him, not where he was in a position to hurt us.

**H.M.S. PARTHIAN, a British submarine which figured in one of the strangest exploits of the war when, off Tobruk, she attacked and sank an Italian submarine. The incident is fully described in a book dealing with naval operations in the Mediterranean and reviewed here.** **See also page 406, Vol. 4.**

*Photo, Wright & Logan*

Well that, I say, will be debated for a very long time to come. But here is an opinion that is new to me from an admiral, expressed in a speech he made to the ship's company of a battleship after our defeat in the Battle of Crete. He told them he believed this marked the certainty of Germany's final overthrow as nothing had marked it before. First, it had shown the Nazis they could not invade England with any hope of success unless they put into the air at least twenty times more aircraft than they used over Crete. Secondly, it had stopped their eastward advance in the Mediterranean and upset their programme, "which would have a most important effect on the whole course of the war." That is certainly a view which historians will have to take into account.

IF you want a lightly-written, cheerful and not too resolutely comic account of the training an Able Seaman goes through when he is taken from shop counter or clerks' desk or author's writing-table and put into the Navy, I can recommend Godfrey Winn's book, Home from Sea (Hutchinson, 10s. 6d.). Whether it is the war, of which he has seen a good deal as a reporter, or whether it is merely that he has grown older, the plain fact is that Mr. Winn has grown out of his rather miss-ish tricks of sentimentality which once made him a laughing stock and in his writing has become a man. There is still a Victorian lady novelist's touch about his style occasionally—a Ouida-esque flavour, shall we say? As in such a passage as this, describing his sensations when he saw the lights of a small Icelandic port after being in the Arctic darkness for some time:

> For a moment I was too overwhelmed to call the attention of my companions to what in my quickened imagination had become the lights of Monte Carlo, that coronet upon the brow of a face, raddled, painted, mercifully hidden by the night and still surpassingly beautiful when appraised from someone's yacht anchored in the bay.

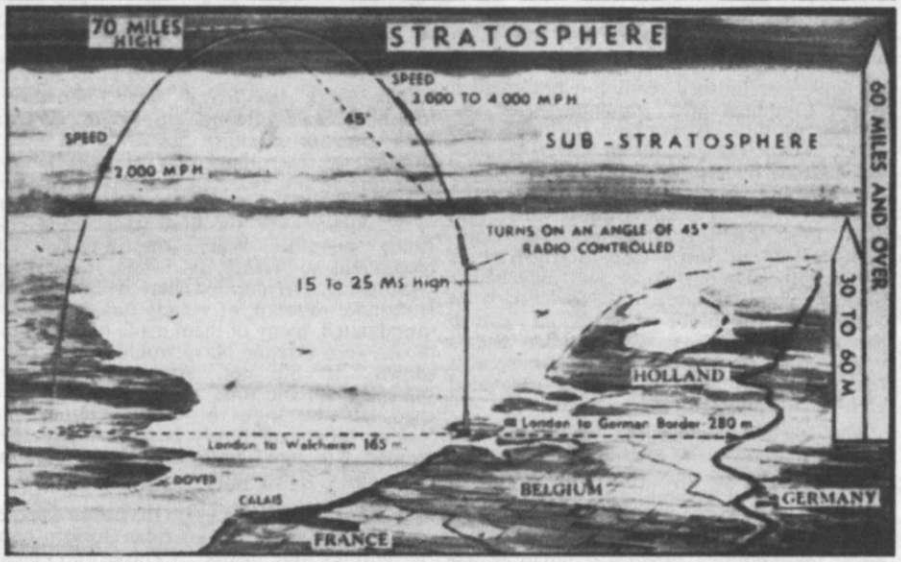
But he seldom relapses into that sort of hokum. His book is a straightforward narrative of his entering the Navy, his experiences while he was being taught what it was necessary for him to know (how to tie knots, for example, at which he wasn't very good), of friends he made, of the difference he found between the way he was treated by such people as hotel receptionists when he wore bluejacket's uniform and when he was a smart young man in expensive clothes.

NAVAL uniform he praises warmly. Material first class. "If one went to one's own tailor, he could not, I'm sure, produce better serge." He became accustomed to it quickly. The food, too, he found no fault with. The chief thing wanting was a regular bath. That was almost as hard to obtain on shore as it was on board. How little real comradeship there is between different ranks came out painfully when he applied for the use of a bathroom at a hotel. He had to stand aside while officers were attended to, and then he received a curt refusal. Not everywhere, though. The smaller ones were more kindly. "We always do what we can for anyone in uniform," was their motto.

Anyone interested in Service slang will find here many terms to add to the naval vocabulary. A "sprog" is a recruit, equivalent of "rookie" in the Army. "Tiddley" means looking all right. "Pussar" stands for genuine or "pukka." Ordinary seamen are O.D.s, chocolate is "nutty," in the "rattle" is the same as in clink. No doubt Mr. Winn will go on using many of these expressions for the rest of his life. He thought he had done with writing when he joined up, but he was invalided out and so began again. This book makes one glad to think he will go on.

# Germany's V 2 Terror-Weapon Hits at England

**A LONG-DISTANCE ROCKET-BOMB** falling in southern England in November 1944, caused this damage (above) to property; houses were devastated beyond repair, but only three people were killed. The effects of a rocket that gouged a deep crater (below) in a suburban roadway; the blast radius was noticeably less than that of the flying bomb. *Photos, Associated Press, Keystone*



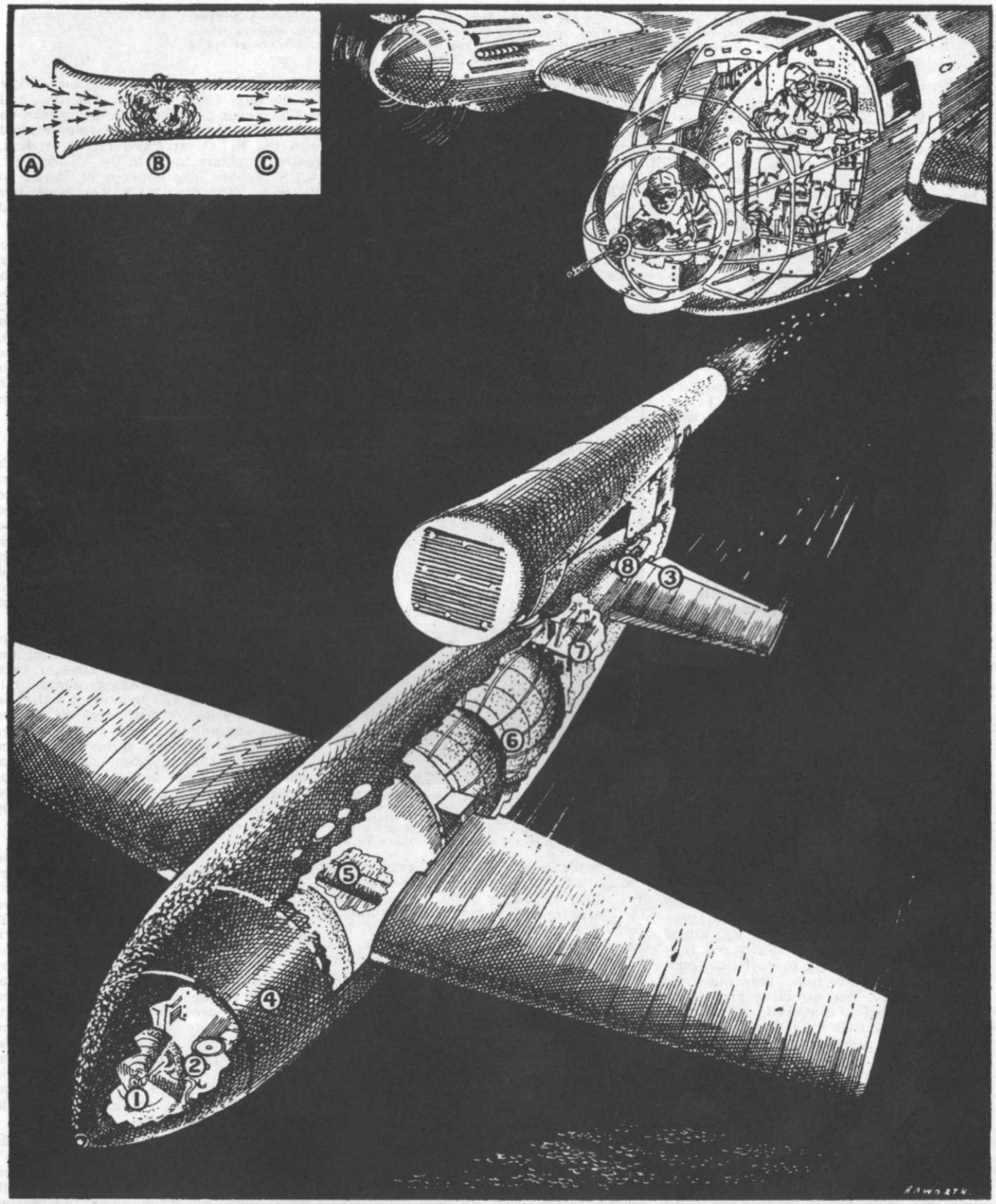

**HOW IT WORKS.** This trajectory chart shows how, after a vertical take-off to a height of 15-25 miles, the rocket, under radio control, is re-adjusted to an angle of 45 degrees till, outstripping sound, it reaches a maximum height of 70 miles. *By courtesy of The Daily Express*

"ANOTHER ATTEMPT BY THE ENEMY to attack the morale of our civil population in the vain hope that he may somehow stave off the defeat which faces him in the field." In these words, spoken in the House of Commons on November 10, 1944, the Prime Minister made the first official announcement that long-range rockets, Germany's secret V 2 weapon, had been falling on this country. Casualties and damage, he said, had so far not been heavy. Mr. Churchill had already warned Parliament of the possibility of such attacks as long ago as the previous February and again in July.

Reports from neutral sources confirmed British experts in their theories that the V 2 weighed some 15 tons, of which as much as 14 tons represented fuel for consumption during flight, the remaining ton being the content of the explosive warhead. An electrically worked turbine-mixer converted liquid oxygen and alcohol into a gas which, when it exceeded the weight of the rocket, shot the missile vertically into the air.

It is possible that the first V 2 attacks were made from bases on the Dutch coast, including Walcheren (cleared of the enemy by November 9). On three successive days in early September the Germans were seen launching their rockets in the direction of England from a small Walcheren village. Eye witnesses said that the Nazis had to do "some sort of stoking" for almost six hours before they could get the rockets to rise. According to neutral sources, the rockets at Walcheren and elsewhere were shot off from a concrete base the size of a tennis-court, or even from a roadway provided this could be served by the heavy transport required. The rockets were said to be about 45 ft. long, six ft. in diameter, with four fins at the rear on which they were perched for launching. The speed was estimated at between 2,000 and 3,000 m.p.h. Experts were of the opinion that rocket-landings could not be regulated to within many miles of the target. The range was thought to be between 200 and 250 miles. As to cost, they believed that each rocket represented as much in man-hours and materials as the construction of a German fighter-bomber.

# Secrets of the New-Style Doodle-Bug Revealed




**PLANE-LAUNCHED FLYING BOMBS** used by the enemy in renewed attacks against this country were described by Mr. Duncan Sandys, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Supply and Chairman of the Flying Bomb Counter-Measures Committee, on October 31, 1944, as being *under* the launching planes (semi-obsolete Heinkel 111s), contrary to previous principles governing composite aircraft and as shown in page 405. They were probably released in the same way as torpedoes or rockets carried by R.A.F. Typhoons, though the risk to the air crews, as well as the take-off difficulties, were considerable. Carrier-planes were said to fly only a few feet above the sea, rarely venturing nearer than 50 miles to our coast.

In this sectional drawing, pilot and observer in the Perspex "nose" of the Heinkel are seen as the bomb is launched. Points of interest are (1) small propeller driven by the bomb's flight, and (2) the electric revolution-counter. When the propeller has registered a set number of revolutions, the elevators (3) are automatically moved into "diving" position, thus urging the bomb to earth. Other bomb-parts are (4) warhead, containing 2,000 lb. of explosives; (5) tubular main span passing through the fuel tank, which has a capacity of 130 gallons; (6) wire-bound compressed-air bottles which inject petrol into the engine; (7) automatic pilot, which keeps the bomb on a set course; and (8) rudder- and elevator-operating mechanism.

The inset shows the working of the large impulse-duct engine. (A) Air stream through the grille to be compressed (B) simultaneously with the injection of petrol. The mixture is then fired by a spark, thus closing the valves. The white-hot gases are then emitted (C), propelling the bomb on its flight.



*Specially drawn for* THE WAR ILLUSTRATED *by Haworth*

# British Women's Services are Busy Overseas

In the wake of our victorious armies, serving with the R.A.F., doing more than 30 different kinds of tasks with the Royal Navy, working as clerks, drivers, cooks, orderlies, military police-women : members of the W.R.N.S., the A.T.S. and the W.A.A.F. have an astonishing record of achievements, as told here by PEGGY SCOTT. See also facing page.

WITH the approach of the Japanese to Singapore in January 1942, W.R.N.S. (Women's Royal Naval Service) wireless telegraphists were taken aboard the last ship which got away, without attack by sea or air . . . When the Germans reached Alamein in June 1942, the Wrens were evacuated from Alexandria. How did these young girls take the close proximity of the enemy ? Miss Jessie Frith, for 2½ years Superintendent W.R.N.S. Mediterranean, said of the evacuation from Alexandria :

"It never occurred to anyone to be afraid. They all had confidence in the Navy. They just waited to see what they had to do. Their one fear in life was that they might be sent home ! There was never a grumble at the discomfort of living in tents in the desert, with sand getting into everything. The girls were very keen and full of the spirit of adventure. As soon as Italy fell I was inundated with offers from Wrens who wanted to serve there. I never had a case of home sickness. The majority of Wrens serving in the Levant area volunteered for further service. They did some very interesting work. They were attached to Admiral Ramsay's planning staff when he was in Cairo, and had a great deal to do with the routeing of convoys in the Mediterranean. They were also responsible for the mail for the Fleet."

Superintendent Frith had the care of Wrens in the whole of the Levant ; Alexandria, Cairo, Suez, Ismailia, Port Said, Haifa, Beirut, and later of those in Malta, Naples, Algiers and Gibraltar. When a girl was seriously ill she flew to her so that her parents could be kept advised as to her progress. When a Wren wanted to get married, Superintendent Frith interviewed the prospective bridegroom and wrote to his commanding officer—and she did this an enormous number of times. When leave was due to a Wren her plans had to be approved by the superintendent. The Wrens have plenty to do when their work is finished, swimming, dancing and attending lectures. Some of them are very keen on music and often hear the famous Palestine Orchestra. There are also excellent Service clubs.

WRENS are serving in Italy. Officers who had been working on the Mediterranean coast of Africa and whose work had helped with the Allied invasion of Sicily and Italy first went with the Navy to an Italian port. Wrens are in France too. They sailed on D-plus 69 Day, not expecting easy times. Each Wren had a camp-bed and bedding in a valise, as well as a folding chair, a canvas bucket, washbag and stand. They have quarters, however, in a building that was used by the Germans to house Todt workers.

The most envied, perhaps, of all the Wrens are those at sea. They work on board troopships, dealing with communications. There are two cypher officers and three coders to each ship, and they form part of the ship's company. They are allowed four trips, then they have to return to their shore stations to give way to other Wren volunteers. The signals office is close to the bridge. Ratings collect the signals from the Wireless Operator's cabin to be either decoded or decyphered, after which the Wren Officer takes them to the captain on the bridge. The Wrens are aware of the location of U-boats and enemy shipping, or of unidentified aircraft, through these signals, but they also know of the watch over their ship that is being kept by the Naval Operations staff ashore and they are not afraid. The same spirit is shown by all the Wrens serving Overseas in more than thirty jobs with the Navy, whether in France or Italy, in North, South, or East Africa, in Gibraltar, Malta, India, Ceylon, or in the U.S.A.

## When A.T.S. Arrived in Normandy

The A.T.S. (Auxiliary Territorial Service) has been very near the enemy. Twenty-four girls were bilingual switchboard operators in Paris from March 17, 1940, until the fall of France the following June. They stayed at their posts until zero hour, 1.30 p.m. on June 13. Then a message was sent through to London that the Exchange would be closing down—the nearness of the enemy made further service impossible. At 7 p.m. Paris was surrounded by the Germans.

When the A.T.S. arrived at the Normandy beach-head in 1944 they had expected to "rough it," but the soldiers prepared what they called a "luxury camp" for the girls. Two large marquees had been put up as sleeping quarters. Drinking water was laid on, and electric light. The clerks among the A.T.S. had come by special request of their branches. The A.T.S. moved forward with the Army and most of the girls are now in Brussels. They live in a block of flats which the Gestapo headquarters staff evacuated in a hurry and on the walls of the cellars are scratched names of Belgian prisoners.

**Miss JESSIE FRITH, for 2½ years Superintendent W.R.N.S., Mediterranean, typical of Britain's "front-line" women overseas, examples of whose courage and devotion to duty are given in this page.** *Photo, Fayer*

THE A.T.S. work as clerks, drivers, cooks' orderlies and military policewomen. For recreation they have N.A.A.F.I., which has come to Brussels. They can hardly deal with the invitations that are showered upon them by the Belgian people—700 in the first three weeks. The girls go everywhere in pairs. They have their own All-Army concert parties, which include A.T.S. artistes. The reception given to the first three "A.T.S. Stars in Battledress" who were allowed to go over and entertain men in the front line was tremendous. Hundreds of A.T.S. are with the British Liberation Army in France and Belgium, and hundreds more are going to the Continent.

A.T.S. have been working in the Middle East for 3 years. Some of their individual jobs are interesting. Junior Commander R. M. Cotton-Kennedy is Messing Officer for the huge Leave Camp in Palestine, and A.T.S. drivers meet the battle-weary men on arrival. Subaltern Dorothy Harding worked with the R.T.O. at Cairo railway station, centre of military traffic in the Middle East. A.T.S. drivers take convoys of lorries to Palestine. The first A.T.S. convoy drivers to go from Cairo to Palestine had to spend a night in the Sinai Desert.

A.T.S. went to Washington with the British Army in 1941 to help prepare for the Second Front. Sergeant Elsie Chapman and Corporal Louise Allingham, Signallers, were among the first to go. "We were the first British women to appear in uniform in Washington," said Sergeant Elsie Chapman, "and people used to come round us in the street and ask questions. The W.A.C. girls were very good to us and asked us to their homes." Sergeant Chapman was 22 months in Washington.

## First W.A.A.F. to Reach Italy

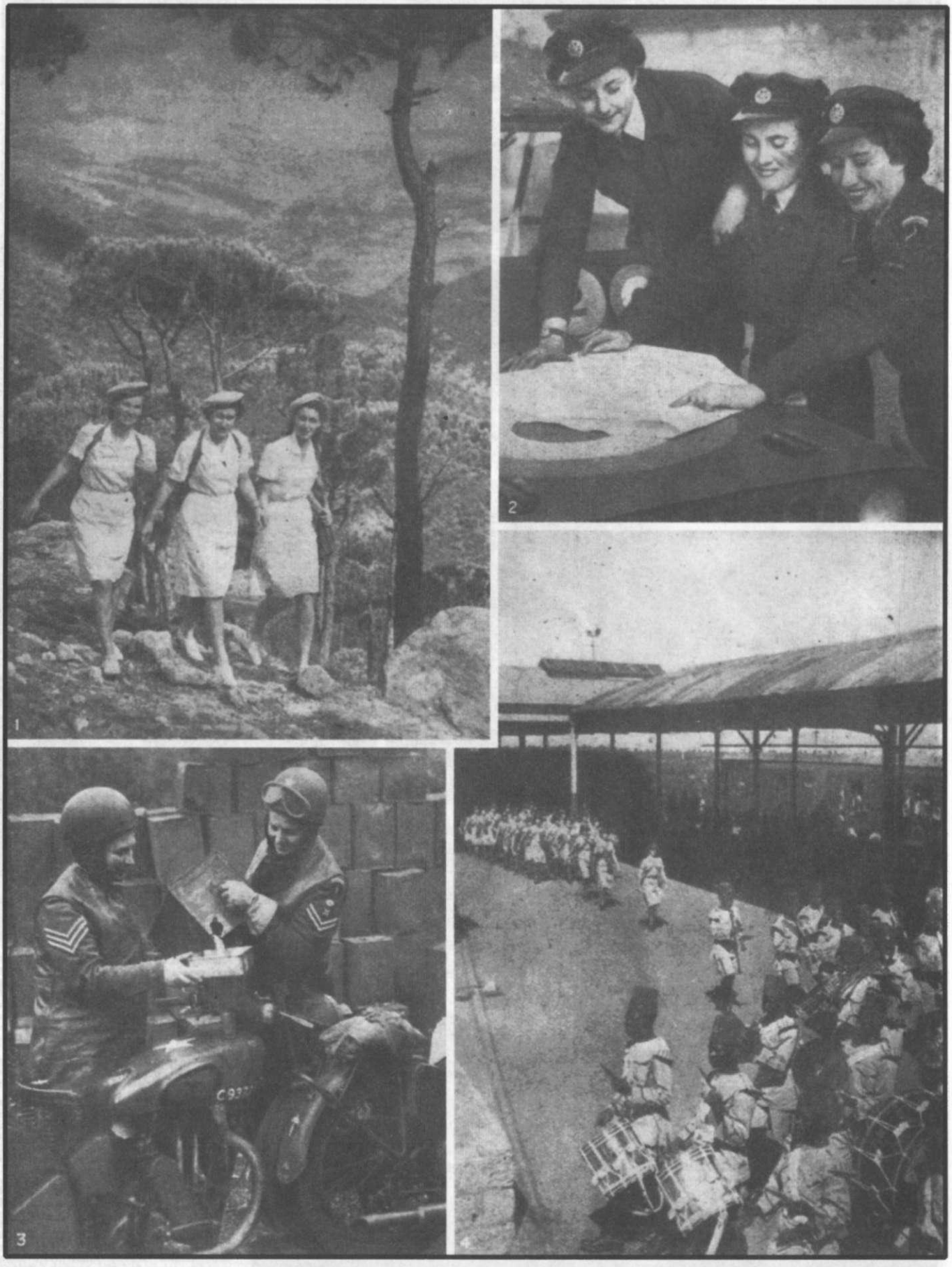
When the first W.A.A.F. (Women's Auxiliary Air Force) Air Ambulance Orderlies arrived in Normandy to bring back the wounded, people were surprised that the R.A.F. had let women go so near to the front. They were not aware that all through the war W.A.A.F. had been going overseas with their units. They went to Canada and the United States, to the West Indies and Bermuda, to Ceylon, Gibraltar, and to the Middle East.

Twelve photographic interpretation officers who were in North Africa interpreting the pictures of Sicily and Italy brought back by the Photographic Reconnaissance Unit, were the first W.A.A.F. to move on with their unit to Italy itself. When they arrived the fighting was only forty miles away. Yet they were glad to be where there was a "nice smell of grass, fresh green fields and cool rain" after the hot sand of North Africa. These twelve W.A.A.F. officers already knew Italy, and the details of bomb damage by Allied aircraft, from examining photographs.

SINCE Air Ambulance Orderlies started to fly to Normandy in the week after the Allied landings they have taken their share of the regular trips to fetch the wounded from France. In the ambulance pool are 150 W.A.A.F., but 800 girls trained for the work are eager to have a share in it. The girl in the blue battledress and a red-cross armlet may be in sole charge of the 24 stretcher cases for which the plane is fitted. The airwomen who have moved forward with their units from Normandy to Belgium have lived sometimes under canvas, sometimes in the local Curé's home, or in an evacuated girls' school. Now they are in luxury flats in Brussels. The sergeant, however, insists on the girls sleeping on their camp beds in case they should become "soft."

The French and Belgian people cannot do enough for "the demoiselles of the R.A.F." They are constantly asking them to their homes and sharing the best they have with them. They admire the Service girls because they are "so feminine"—perhaps they have heard of the hairdresser who accompanied one contingent ! Four hairdressers have also gone with five hundred airwomen who have recently sailed for India. Among them are clerks and plotters, wireless, teleprinter and R/T operators, nursing orderlies and equipment assistants. Some will be stationed at a landing ground or flying-boat station, and others at headquarters units in Bombay, Delhi, Kandy or Colombo.

# These War-Workers in Uniform See the World



ON AND OFF DUTY, W.R.N.S., A.T.S., and W.A.A.F. have managed to see a good deal of the war zones. Stationed in Syria, these Wrens (1) are hiking in the mountains above Beirut, while W.A.A.F. maintenance-drivers (2) study their new home-base on a map of Paris. Dispatch-riders of the A.T.S., operating between Paris and the fighting-zones, " gas-up " (3). The first A.T.S., nearly 200 all-told, to arrive at the station at Nairobi, Kenya, were welcomed by the King's African Rifles band (4).



*Photos, British Official; British Newspaper Pool, Fox*

# 'Aussies' at Home in Netherlands New Guinea

**AUSTRALIAN SERVICEMEN** quickly acclimatized themselves to their tropical surroundings in Netherlands New Guinea. Flashback to their earlier exploits was provided by Mr. F. M. Forde, Australian Army Minister, on November 2, 1944, when he declared that the Australian Army laid the foundation of General MacArthur's invasion of the Philippines (see page 429) when in 1942 they repulsed the Japanese advancing on Port Moresby.

**FLIGHT-LIEUT. H. W. STUART,** of the R.A.A.F., handles a shattered machine-gun from a Japanese fighter he has just shot down (1). Ornamental entrance to an Australian camp which bears the Malayan words "Slamat Datang," meaning "Welcome" (2). The enervating climate seems to have had no ill-effects on these R.A.A.F. fighter-pilots seen scrambling to their aircraft (3). Private G. B. Cutts takes from a member of the Netherlands New Guinea Police Force a lesson in coconut-opening (4). Shipped from Queensland sturdy Australian sheep provide meat for the troops; Private H. Haller is acting as shepherd (5).

*Exclusive to* THE WAR ILLUSTRATED

# I WAS THERE! Eye Witness Stories of the War

## *Between Battles in the Land of Awful Silence*

**The Forgotten Army is an unofficial title which has become attached to our 14th Army now fighting the Japanese. Here, in extracts from letters home by a young London officer (published by arrangement with The Star), is a vivid picture of grim conditions our men encounter in the Burma jungles.**

ON the way to Tamu there were abandoned guns and old positions along the roadside, and recaptured machinery with Jap lettering painted over the British and American makers' names. In Tamu itself I went into some of the temples and pagodas, and there were brass and marble Buddhas, gilded, still sitting four and five feet high on their thrones, some incredibly ornate with gilding and coloured mirror inlay.

In one of them, three of the six Buddhas had lost their heads, which lay on the filthy floor beside Jap steel helmets, equipment and clothing. At the end, there was a mangled pile of bones, relics of the act of hara-kiri. They were bare and white, eaten by vultures and rats and disinfected by fire. It looked as though the fellow had pressed a grenade to his stomach from the way the bones were broken. (See illus. page 343.)

The country around Imphal is some of the loveliest I've seen in India, especially when the paddy fields are flooded. You get glorious sunsets, and the mountains take on the most lovely colours. When it rains, it rains like hell, and nothing is dry. But when it is fine, it is invigorating.

At Tiddim you meet a most implacable type of jungle. It takes ages to cut your way through it and troops, when they have to make a detour, are doing well if they cover five or six miles in a day. The elephant grass which grows in the clearings looks like lovely downland at a distance, but when you get into it it may be anything up to ten or twelve feet high and you can see nothing.

The road itself is shocking to drive over, and even in a jeep you are flying through the air from pothole to pothole most of the time. When it rains everything is turned to mud, and you slither as you try to walk. The most remarkable thing is the feeling of absolute loneliness and isolation.

There are scarcely any villages in this part, and as night falls—there's no lighting except a torch after dark—you feel as though you are being enveloped in a shroud of nothingness. The awful silence may be broken by a flash in the valley below, and a few seconds later you hear the bark of some of our guns. The crickets rattle in a most irritating way, and a jeep may grind its gears rounding a steep corner.

The loneliness is not the bewitching loneliness of an evening at home, miles from the nearest road ; it is something much more austere and penetrating. It is the loneliness of country which has never known the habitation of man. It is as though the hills resented the intrusion of the newcomer, with his explosive machinery and weapons.

Men who have been here some time seem to be used to it, and when I remarked on it they said they hadn't noticed it. But it has affected them. They feel it in lack of friendship and a palling of constant companionship. They admit to a shyness and a fear of meeting a woman again. They say they would not know how to talk to her.

The Japs are fighting a tenacious rearguard action along the road. When they dig in it takes quite a bit to move them, and there is little room to manoeuvre on a road which runs like a thin ribbon through unlimited hills. When they clear out they often leave quite a bit of equipment lying about, but very few prisoners. If they cannot get their dead away they leave them, and if they have been dead for very long, they stink to high heaven.

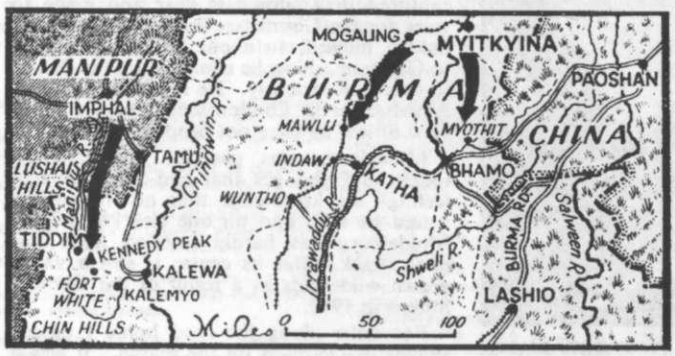
In one place a landslide had carried away two sections of the road up which our transport must pass to get forward. When the move took place after the capture of the position it was impossible to get even a jeep through, but within an hour or two a diversion had been cleared, and heavy transport was passing up the road, being winched up a hillside at an angle of more than 45 degrees to pick up the road five or six hundred feet higher up.

The feats of sheer endurance and determination to get through and carry out the job in hand are really amazing. I am afraid that people at home will never fully understand what it means to fight on this front. Though it may lack the catastrophic nature of European battlefields, the job is just as hard in many ways. There are absolutely no amenities, and there is weather and climate of an extremely changeable character to be borne the whole time.

You can never compare it with other war fronts as far as the number of men employed, the enemy casualties, prisoners, and distances covered are concerned. What the men do need, however, is some more concrete assurances than they have so far had that people at home realize what they are doing. Their morale is fine, but they still feel that they are forgotten by people at home. If you saw the conditions under which they have to live their daily lives, you would agree that they deserve more recognition than they have had.

We have reached Manipur River; 40 miles from Tiddim, the township from which this road takes its name. It took us about three hours to cover under thirty miles, and even then we had to leave the jeep about six miles short of our destination as the road was blocked. Last night the conditions were even worse. At one point on the road we

**TIDDIM ROAD FRONTIER STONE, where India meets Burma, marked yet another mile in the victory-journey of this soldier of the 5th Indian Division in the autumn of 1944. See story in this page.** *Photo, Indian Official*




**STRIPPED to the waist for the cookhouse parade, this crew (below) of a British 25-pounder reflected the courage of our troops whose lonely life is described here. The advance of the 5th Indian Division along the Tiddim-Fort White-Kalemyo Road in November 1944 rolled up a vital front of more than 60 miles (map left). The capture of Kalemyo, Japanese strongpoint, was announced on November 16.**

*Photo, British Official. Map, The Daily Herald*

got through 20 minutes before three landslides completely blocked it. As we passed the spots the stones and earth were already shifting.

The road, which is cut for most of its way out of the hillside, with a drop of anything up to fifteen hundred or two thousand feet on one side, is nothing more than a mud track until the engineers can resurface it. When there is a landslide bulldozers just cut away a bit more of the hill to make a passable track for jeeps.

It is all right when it is dry, but the moment you get rain driving becomes a nightmare, and there is no wall between you and the valley bottom. It had been raining fairly steadily all day yesterday, and so the road was at its worst. By the time we were ready to start back it was getting dusk. After the first few miles it was completely dark, and headlights are of little use on hairpin bends.

Added to this was a new and sudden fall of rain, and the jeep was firing on only two cylinders. We had to struggle the whole way up in bottom gear. The jeep was skidding the whole time like a drunken duchess, and at more than one place she went over in ruts to an angle of about 45 degrees. I was damn glad to get back to our headquarters, and after a double rum in coffee, and some food, slipped out of my soaking clothes into bed and read until I dropped off to sleep.

# *General Slept While We Took 2,000 of His Men*

**The last act of the long-drawn out battle for Antwerp ended in farce. The background of it was the canals, the narrow cobbled streets and prim houses of Middelburg in Walcheren Island (see pages 463-466). This dispatch by Alexander Clifford of The Daily Mail was dated Nov. 7, 1944.**

THE curtain went up yesterday evening, but even this afternoon the scene was still touched with the Alice in Wonderland atmosphere of a situation for which no one has ever invented any rules. By yesterday afternoon most of the remaining Germans in Walcheren had been washed up like so much flotsam and jetsam into Middelburg. There was no more dry land for them to fight on. A British column was coming in from the Flushing direction and another was threatening to cross the great canal from the west.

Lieut.-General Daser, Commander of the 70th, or Stomach Trouble, Division, decided that he could do no more to keep our ships out of Antwerp. From his narrow little white-panelled room in the Wilhelmina Palace he gave orders to cease fire. Somehow he communicated the fact to the British column coming from Flushing.

But the other column from the west appeared first to clean the situation up. They paddled across the canal in assault boats. Then the comedy began. It was 300 British against 2,000 Germans, It was getting dark and our men did not even know their way around. In a dazed sort of way they began to persuade the Germans to deposit their arms in the fire station.

## Night Vigil in the Square

General Daser retired to bed with a raging headache and a bag of aspirin. He said he could not formally surrender till daybreak, and he could not deal with anyone below the rank of brigadier. He pulled his yellow satin eiderdown over him on his blue velvet couch, and they locked him in and spared one man to guard him.

As darkness fell the 300 British began to try to herd the 2,000 Germans into the main square. They scoured the byways and corralled the prisoners as you might corral cattle. When they had filled the square they posted themselves across all the roads leading into it and prayed that no one would start any trouble.

The Germans were not happy sitting in the cold, damp square all night, but it was the only way to deal with them. They had no intention at all of making trouble.

By the morning General Daser had eaten his way half-through the bag of aspirin, but he had not touched the 11 bottles of champagne at the head of his bed. He gave them to the British officer who came to call him. I tried a bottle this afternoon—Veuve Clicquot of an excellent year. By morning the fire station was like a cross between a salvage dump and a war museum. There was a vast mound of German steel helmets that looked like a mammoth caviare.

There was an extraordinary quantity of hand grenades. Quite inexplicably, there were at least 2,000 green tin lampshades. Still the British were enormously outnumbered and they decided to make the Germans help themselves. So you got the 24 rowers, 12 sanitary inspectors, and nine bakers.

**ANGRY WITH THE PHOTOGRAPHER, General Daser, German Commander at Middelburg, captured on November 6, 1944, turned his back as he was being escorted to captivity in a British assault-craft, as told in this page.** *Photo, British Newspapers Pool*

The rowers were volunteers. But when they found that their job was to paddle boatloads of prisoners across 50 yards of canal the sculling champions and professional oarsmen among them withdrew their offer in disgust. Eventually the prisoners had to haul their boats across by ropes stretched from bank to bank.

The sanitary inspectors were a job lot left over when all the other prisoners had been sorted. Their task was to deal with the electricity and water situation, and they were anxious to be helpful. But it turned out there was nothing for them to do—too much water and no electricity—and they were put back with the others.

The bakers were set to work to produce rations for all the others. This Stomach Trouble Division is on special diet, and its bread is a little whiter than that of the rest of the Army.

I saw General Daser across the canal after lunch. He was a burly figure in a blue-grey leather overcoat, and he turned his back angrily when some photographers pointed their cameras at him. But the boatman spun the boat round so that he was facing the cameras again, and the comedy was repeated. The waiting Germans began to smile. The general sat down stiffly in the stern and went across with his hands on his hips and a scowl on his face.

## That End-of-a-Campaign Feeling

By this afternoon the Dutch had hung out their flags and put on all their Christmas gala finery and were parading the streets seeing the sights. They viewed the German equipment dump, and then they examined the British troops' clothes and arms and the amphibious landing-craft. Then they went down to the canal to see the vast queue of German prisoners waiting to cross.

In the crowd of civilians I met a gay little Italian sailor with a rosette in his buttonhole saying "Welcome." He fitted admirably into the crazy scene. He said he had been captured in Toulon last year and made to work for the Germans. Ten days ago he had hidden himself, to avoid being transported to Germany. Now he couldn't get the British to take him seriously. He insinuated that his Ambassador in London would take a grave view of it if he were not properly treated!

Middelburg was cheerful and fantastic today, and you got that end-of-a-campaign feeling—the knowledge that no more guns would be fired and no one else killed here. Middelburg has hardly suffered from this final attack. But its centre is still a weed-grown wilderness as a result of the German Stukas in 1940.

For miles along the road home I passed squads of Germans on the march. It was a day of winter sunshine, with great mounds of white clouds standing around the horizon and a terrific wind. It swept across the marshes, blowing the rushes flat and whipping the floods into waves. The screaming seabirds could barely fly against it. And the Germans marched east, bowed against the wind, and muffled against the cold, through the desolate land they had failed to defend.

# *The Havoc and Destruction I Saw in Italy*

**There have been many stories about the conditions under which the Army has to fight its battles. Squadron-Leader Derek Adkins, R.A.F., here describes for "The War Illustrated" the havoc of war on hotly-contested sectors of the 8th Army front in Italy as he saw it.**

WHENEVER I visited front-line troops of the 8th Army there was always ample proof of the way in which our light bombers, fighters and fighter-bombers had blasted the enemy from positions in the path of our advancing infantry and armour. Craters and burnt-out wrecks along the roads told of ill-fated attempts made by the Germans to bring up badly needed supplies, while derelict tanks and abandoned 88-mm. guns were evidence of the enemy's failure to withstand the continuous air onslaught that had been maintained against his lines of communication.

I remember one particular occasion when the Army had asked us to attack a road junction just south of Vasto, where the coastal road meets the lateral one running up from the Apennines. Fighter-bombers went out and bombed and strafed the position, and when I motored by the spot a few days later there were craters everywhere. It was some of the best bombing I've seen, and whatever had been holding up our columns must have been either wiped out or quickly withdrawn.

Although most of the villages in the hills escaped destruction from the air, the Germans did turn many of them into strongpoints.

But wherever there were troop concentrations, or concealed gun positions or machine-gun nests, our pilots sought them out and bombed and strafed each one in turn. Isernia was a case in point. It is only a small town in the central Apennines, but after our air attacks there was hardly a building which hadn't been razed to the ground.

At Foggia, too, there were all the familiar signs of accurate bombing. The marshalling yards, for example, were a scrap-heap of twisted metal, with engines up-ended, their boilers burst open by the force of high explosives. Burnt-out railway trucks were still there, loaded with charred remains of German aircraft and engines and other war material. Coaches lay on their side, or were grotesquely balanced half up in the air, with splintered glass windows or no windows at all, their doors and sides smashed by blast.

The most fantastic sight of all I saw was just after the Germans had been finally cleared out of Ortona, a small coastal port on the Adriatic about twenty-five miles south of Pescara. I was living at Vasto at the time, in a villa that had belonged to an Italian painter. It had a superb view right across a sweeping lagoon of the Adriatic, and from the windows of my room I could see all the tiny fishing smacks like wooden toys on a set piece, and down by the beach, 300 feet below, the wide white sweep of the waves as they rippled in.

The weather had been pretty changeable. One day there was a clear sky and wisps of cloud, and the next teeming rain that turned all roads and tracks into quagmires. But one morning the sun must have been shining somewhere, for the complete arc of a rainbow suddenly appeared in the sky like a huge halo over the Apennines. I set off in a jeep with my driver, "Blondie" Wilkinson. Apart from the specific job of work I had to do, I wanted to see what was left of Ortona after the fighting that preceded its capture.

As we entered by the coast road, sappers were still picking out mines and clearing a way through, down to the remains of the harbour. From the car I could clearly see the massive curved mole systematically breached along its entire length, with the hulks and twisted debris of a few ships just visible above the surging water.

**WINKLING OUT SNIPERS in shell-shattered Ortona, Italy, which fell to the 8th Army after heavy fighting in December 1943, this Canadian infantryman is "all eyes." Devastation left by the Nazis is vividly described in the accompanying story.** *Photo, British Official*

In the main street leading to the Town Hall square a bulldozer was carving a passage through piles of rubble from houses blown up to hinder the advance of our tanks. Whichever way I looked the gaunt outline of wrecked and shattered buildings stood bleak and gaping, their sides torn by shellfire and explosions. In one of them a fire was raging on the ground floor. The flames licked upwards and across the narrow street, while the sharp crackle of burning timber mingled with the noise of distant guns and nearby mortars. In some the bare remains of splintered furniture hung in mid-air from twisted girders, the floors drooping pathetically into space. In others the devastation had been more complete.

A Canadian sergeant took me from house to house and showed me how each storey, how each room, had had to be fought for. As soon as one house had been taken a hole was blown into the adjoining one so that the Germans could be methodically cleared out from top to bottom. As we climbed the stairs of a block of flats grim evidence of the recent struggle for this tiny coastal town littered each side. Dead Germans from the picked Paratroop Division lay like wax models prone and stiff, testimony to the stubborn resistance the Canadians had to overcome before the battle was won.

As we stumbled over the heaps of rubble and brick and mortar, threading our way carefully to avoid the mines and booby traps still sown under the white dust and debris, four Spitfires of the Desert Air Force wheeled in the sky overhead. I left Ortona that day with the conviction that nothing more than the reconstruction of a new city was possible from the shambles and carnage the Germans left behind there. But the havoc and destruction I saw in Italy can be nothing compared with the absolute holocaust that is taking place in Germany today. And I suppose that will provide many people with some sense of satisfaction, if only as being a measure of retribution.

# OUR DIARY OF THE WAR

***NOVEMBER 8, Wednesday*** *1,894th day*
**Western Front.**—U.S. 3rd Army launched attack from south of Metz to east of Nancy.
**Air.**—Synthetic oil plants at Homberg and Merseburg attacked by R.A.F. and U.S. bombers.
**Mediterranean.**—Italian-based Allied bombers struck at German troop concentrations and communications in the Balkans.
**General.**—Germans announced that long-range rocket bomb (V2) had been in action against London.

***NOVEMBER 9, Thursday*** *1,895th day*
**Western Front.**—Resistance of German rearguard at Moerdijk broken by Polish troops. All resistance ceased in Walcheren.
**Air.**—Allied bombers attacked targets in Metz area and marshalling yards at Saarbrucken.
**Burma.**—Fort White, south of Tiddim, captured by 14th Army troops.
**General.**—Germans stated building of U-boats had been stopped to increase production of tanks and guns.

***NOVEMBER 10, Friday*** *1,896th day*
**Western Front.**—Chateau-Salins, N.E. of Nancy, captured by 3rd Army.
**Air.**—Airfields, industrial plants and communications in Cologne and Frankfurt areas attacked by U.S. aircraft. Mosquitoes bombed Hanover.
**Italy.**—8th Army troops captured Forli, on Via Emilia.
**Home Front.**—Mr. Churchill stated that long-range rocket bomb (V2) was in operation against this country.
**General.**—Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden arrived in Paris for Armistice Day celebrations.

***NOVEMBER 11, Saturday*** *1,897th day*
**Air.**—Oil plants in the Ruhr attacked by Allied bombers. Harburg-Hamburg and Dortmund bombed at night.
**Baltic.**—Germans declared East Baltic a war zone in which all ships were liable to be sunk at sight.
**Sea.**—Announced that H.M. submarines had sunk 45 ships in Far Eastern waters.
**Far East.**—Super-Fortresses bombed Omura aircraft works in Kyushu, and docks at Nanking and Shanghai.
**General.**—France invited to be member of European Advisory Commission, with Britain, U.S.A. and Soviet Union.

***NOVEMBER 12, Sunday*** *1,898th day*
**Air.**—Battleship Tirpitz sunk by R.A.F. Lancasters in Tromso Fjord.
**Sea.**—British naval forces attacking enemy convoy off Norway sank 9 out of 11 ships.
**Mediterranean.**—Italian-based Allied bombers made third attack in week against Brenner Pass railway route.
**China.**—Loss of Kweilin, capital of Kwangsi, admitted by Chinese.

***NOVEMBER 13, Monday*** *1,899th day*
**Western Front.**—Verny, fortress near Metz, evacuated by Germans. U.S. 3rd Army captured fort at Thionville.
**China.**—Announced that U.S. air base at Liuchow, the last in East China, had been evacuated.
**General.**—Mr. Churchill reviewed French 1st Army on the Jura front.

***NOVEMBER 14, Tuesday*** *1,900th day*
**Western Front.**—2pd Army launched new attack against German pocket west of the Maas.
**Pacific.**—Announced that Japanese had regained small island in the Palau group.
**Balkans.**—Allied commando raid on island of Melos.
**General.**—Announced that Norwegian military mission was attached to Russian command on Arctic front.

***NOVEMBER 15, Wednesday*** *1,901st day*
**Western Front.**—French 1st Army launched attack on Jura front. U.S. 3rd Army took two more Metz forts.
**Air.**—R.A.F. Lancasters bombed oil plant at Dortmund in the Ruhr.
**Balkans.**—Yugoslav and Bulgarian troops occupied Skoplje, Yugoslavia.
**Germany.**—New decree valid from October 1 called for "Nazi activity" by members of the Wehrmacht.
**Pacific.**—New U.S landing, supported by Royal Navy, in Mapia Islands, between Philippines and New Guinea.
**Sea.**—Announced that H.M. submarines had sunk 24 more ships in Far East.

***NOVEMBER 16, Thursday*** *1,902nd day*
**Western Front.**—U.S. 1st Army attacked east of Aachen, and 9th Army came into action N.E. of Aachen.
**Air.**—Allied heavy bombers struck at Dueren, Julich, Heinsberg and Eschweiler, ahead of ground troops on Aachen front.
**Burma.**—Kalemyo, on Chindwin front, captured by East African troops.

***NOVEMBER 17, Friday*** *1,903rd day*
**Western Front.**—Gressenich, 10 miles east of Aachen, captured by 1st Army.
**General.**—Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory missing on flight to take up command in S.E. Asia.

***NOVEMBER 18, Saturday*** *1,904th day*
**Western Front.**—2nd Army launched new attack against Geilenkirchen, north of Aachen. U.S. 3rd Army patrols entered Metz.
**Pacific.**—Allied aircraft destroyed at least 110 Japanese planes in raids on Manila harbour area.

***NOVEMBER 19, Sunday*** *1,905th day*
**Western Front.**—Geilenkirchen captured by British and U.S. troops.
**Mediterranean.**—Allied bombers from Italy hit oil targets at Vienna and Linz.
**Balkans.**—Tirana, capital of Albania, liberated by Albanian patriots.
**Pacific.**—Escorted heavy bombers attacked Japanese naval base at Brunei Bay, North Borneo.

***NOVEMBER 20, Monday*** *1,906th day*
**Western Front.**—Armour of 1st French Army drove through Belfort Gap and reached the Upper Rhine.
**Air.**—R.A.F. and U.S. bombers attacked oil plants at Gelsenkirchen and railway yards at Munster.
**Pacific.**—Allied ground forces completed occupation of Mapia Islands.

***NOVEMBER 21, Tuesday*** *1,907th day*
**Air.**—V2 site in Holland bombed by R.A.F. fighter-bombers. German oil plants at Hamburg, Merseburg and Homberg attacked by Allied heavy bombers and fighters. At night R.A.F. bombed oil plants at Sterkrade and Castrop Rauxel and railway centre of Aschaffenburg, S.E. of Frankfort.
**Russian Front.**—Soviet troops launched final attack on Germans in Oesel Island, off Estonia.
**Far East.**—Super-Fortresses attacked Omura aircraft works on Kyushu, and dock installations at Nanking and Shanghai.

## Flash-backs

**1939**

November 8. *Bomb explosion in Munich beer-cellar shortly after Hitler's departure.*
November 13. *First bombs fell on British soil, in the Shetlands.*

**1940**

November 11-12. *Fleet Air Arm attacked Italian navy at Taranto.*
November 14-15. *Heavy air raid on Coventry from dusk to dawn.*

**1941**

November 14. *H.M.S. Ark Royal sank after torpedo attack*
November 18. *8th Army, under General Cunningham, launched offensive in Libya.*

**1942**

November 8. *Allied forces landed in French North Africa.*
November 13. *8th Army captured Tobruk, Sollum and Bardia.*
November 19. *Russian offensive around Stalingrad began.*

**1943**

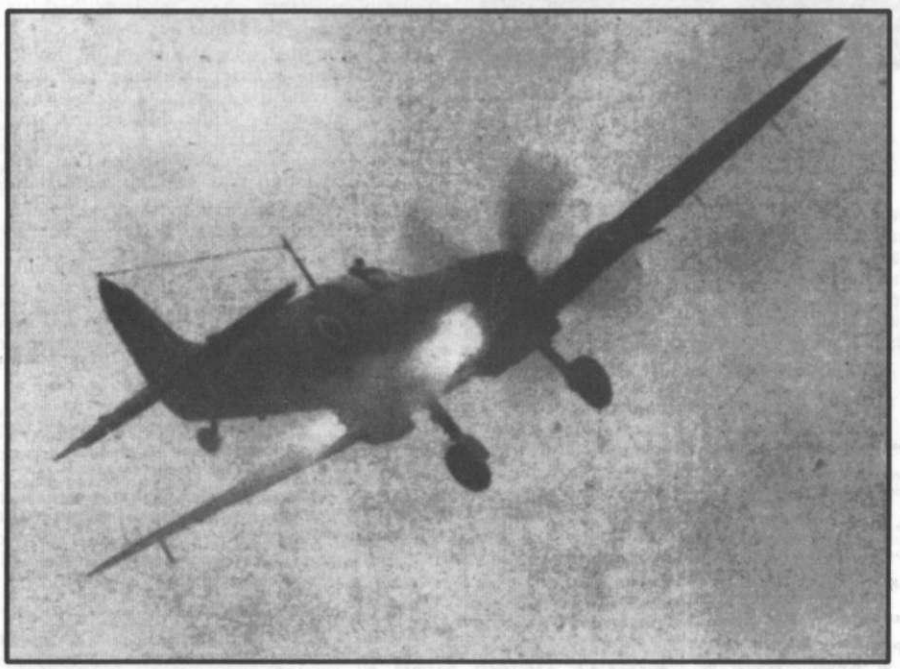
November 20. *U.S. troops landed on Makin and Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands, Central Pacific.*

# THE WAR IN THE AIR

*by* **Capt. Norman Macmillan, M.C., A.F.C.**

THE Allied armies in the west opened a, full-scale offensive along the front from Holland to Switzerland in the morning of November 16, 1944. The attack was preceded, accompanied and followed by air action on an unprecedented scale, with British and American bombers co-operating wherever the High Command required.

The U.S. 1st Army attacked first, east of Aachen. Its blow was succeeded by those of the U.S. 9th Army farther north and of the British 2nd Army in Holland. The U.S. 3rd and 7th Armies and the French 1st Army were in action to the south and east. It remains to be seen if winter offensives in Western Europe by modern armies can be more effective than were those of the last war; if so, it is probable that air power will be largely responsible for the difference. The main pressure of the opening blows was directed towards the Düsseldorf-Cologne-Bonn stretch of the Rhine, and the greatest bomber blows were made against targets lying between the fighting front and the river.



**LAUNCHED BY ROCKET, A SEAFIRE takes off in a blaze of no uncertain glory (above). These fighter-planes of the Fleet Air Arm, it was revealed in November 1944, were being "shot" from the decks of aircraft-carriers in this manner. Each plane, it was stated, was fitted with four rockets—two on each wing. The rockets exploded with a terrific roar, launching the plane almost straight from the deck; thus, only the smallest runway was needed.** *Photo, Associated Press*

TWELVE hundred Fortresses and Liberators with 450 Lightnings and Thunderbolts attacked German strongpoints and military formations in the Dueren-Eschweiler area before and during the opening of the attack. In the afternoon, R.A.F. Bomber Command attacked the Dueren-Julich-Heinsberg area with 1,150 bombers escorted by 250 Mustangs and Spitfires of Fighter Command using Master bomber target location technique to concentrate the bombing. Thousands of 260-lb. fragmentation bombs were used; these bombs do not crater the surface and so do not make the going difficult for the troops following up; instead, their blast throws destructive pieces of "shrapnel" at high velocity over a considerable area around the bursting-point. The first day's air co-operation by more than 3,000 aircraft was surpassed on the second day of the ground offensive by the intervention of more than 5,000 aircraft, from which forces less than one-third of one per cent were lost.

It has now been revealed that the battleship Prince of Wales was in Cammell Laird's shipyard in Birkenhead during an attack on the port by German bombers in August 1940. Six H.E bombs fell in the yard, one exploding between the quayside and the battleship. The ship began to list, for blast had burst hull plates and the port tanks were quickly filling. Divers and firemen saved her after nearly three days' work. The following year, as the flagship of Admiral Sir Tom Phillips, the Prince of Wales was sunk by Japanese aircraft off Malaya.

### WHEN They Rolled Missiles Down a Precipice at the Tirpitz

In the night of April 27, 1942, Halifax and Lancaster bombers, the former led by Wing Commander D. C. T. Bennett (the Australian pilot who flew for Imperial Airways and British Overseas Airways before the war, making several spectacular flights in the float-seaplane Mercury launched pick-a-back from the mother flying-boat Maia), attacked the German battleship Tirpitz in Fotten Fjord off Trondheim Fjord, using relatively small A.P. bombs, mines, and depth charges. They dropped their missiles on the cliff so that they might roll down the precipice and damage the ship below the waterline where she lay safe from direct air attack under the shelter of the rock. It was impossible to assess the result of the attack, but the Tirpitz survived, to be subsequently attacked in other fjords of Norway. Bennett had to get out by parachute. He landed in Norway, escaped to Britain, and is now an Air Vice-Marshal and the Officer in Command of the Pathfinder Force.

This tall, slightly built, good-looking Australian must have been particularly interested in the operation that sank the Tirpitz in Tromsö Fjord in daylight on November 12, 1944. Wing Commander J. B. Tait, D.S.O., D.F.C., and Squadron Leader A. G. Williams led the force of 29 Lancaster bombers, each aircraft carrying one 12,000-lb. A.P. bomb. Three more Lancasters accompanied the force for photographic duties. The crew of the 45,000-ton battleship saw the aircraft approaching in clear weather, and opened fire at ten miles range with 15-in. guns. As the aircraft closed in at about 13,000 feet flak also came up from other ships. But one of the first four bombs scored a direct hit amidships on the Tirpitz and all the battleship's guns stopped firing. More direct hits were made and the ship was seen to be burning. The bomber crews were in the air for 13 hours.

One of the photographic Lancasters was piloted by Flight-Lieut. B. A. Buckham, of New South Wales (who was awarded the D.F.C. on the same day for having made a solo attack on Berlin when his bomber was 35 minutes late and he went on alone across the defences). Buckham saw four or five direct hits on the Tirpitz. He had set course for home, after taking 700 feet of film, thinking the ship would not sink, when his rear gunner came up and said, "I think she is heeling over!" Buckham swung round and saw the ship listing at 70 or 80 degrees, with her red-painted keel glistening in the sunshine. So he went round again and got "a grand picture" from 5,000 feet. When the photographic reconnaissance aircraft went out later the Tirpitz had turned turtle. (See illus. in opposite page.)

### THE Chief of Bomber Command Sent a Significant Message

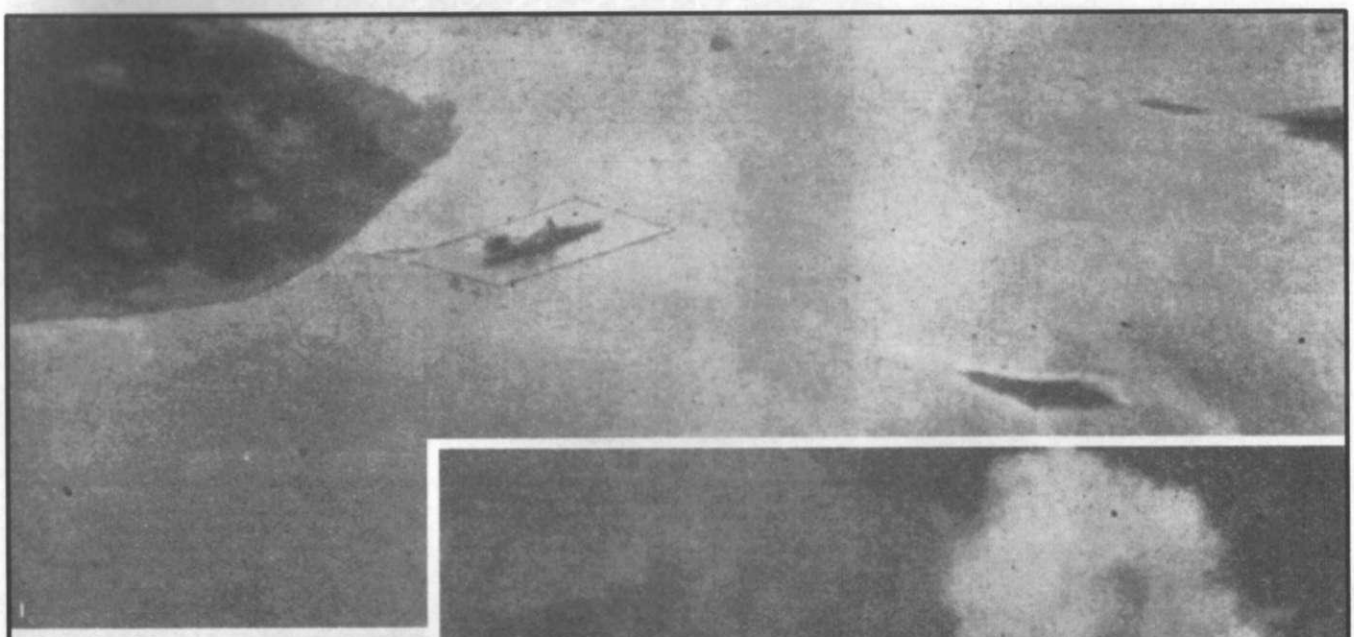
The designer of the 12,000-lb. bomb is Mr. B. M. Wallis, of Vickers-Armstrong. He also designed the special mines which breached the Mohne and Eder dams, and was the originator of the geodetic structure used in the Wellesley and Wellington bombers.

In the first attack with 12,000-lb. bombs from Archangel, the Tirpitz was saved by prompt use of a smoke screen, although one bomb hit her. In the second 12,000-lb. bomb attack, after she was moved to Tromsö, the ship was obscured by cloud. After the third attack which sank her, Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Harris sent a message to Air Vice-Marshal R. H. Cochrane, commanding the Group from which the Lancasters came, containing this significant phrase: "... these operations put precisely that end to this ship which was inevitable as soon as the squadrons got a clear bead on her." Which indicates clearly enough what the Chief of Bomber Command thinks about 12,000-lb. bombs versus battleships.

AROUND Leyte, American air power is reducing reinforcements to the Japanese. On November 9, 1944, when four 5,000-ton ships and 15 destroyers landed Jap troops at Ormoc, U.S. dive-bombers sank three transports and seven destroyers; fighters shot down 16 Jap planes; U.S. losses were four bombers and four fighters. Next day another convoy of four transports and six destroyers was wiped out and 19 enemy planes shot down. Estimates gave Japanese landings as 5,000-10,000 troops.

The Japanese Army, witnessing the sea/air threat to their maritime communications in the south-west Pacific, have thrust hard on the Chinese mainland to gain a through overland route to Indo-China, thus forcing American air forces to evacuate airfields at Hengyang, Lungling, Tanchuk, and Paiching. On November 7 at Liuchow the Americans set fire to the buildings of their last airfield, blew up the runways, and burned their petrol stores. The enemy broke into the streets of Liuchow on November 11, and the Americans had lost the last Chinese mainland air base from which their aircraft could effectively cut the Japanese supply lines.

# Inglorious Tirpitz Takes the Final Knock-Out



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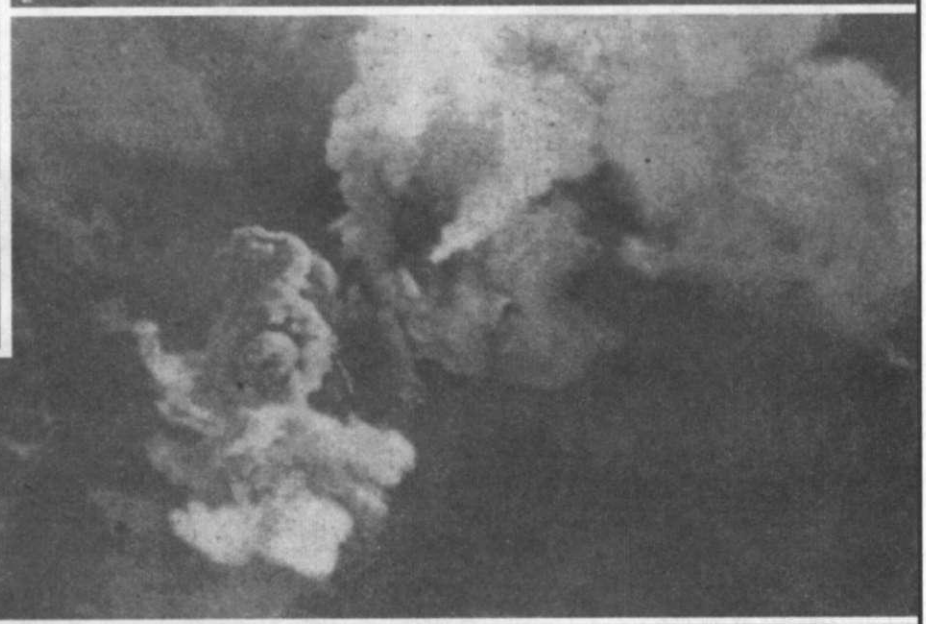

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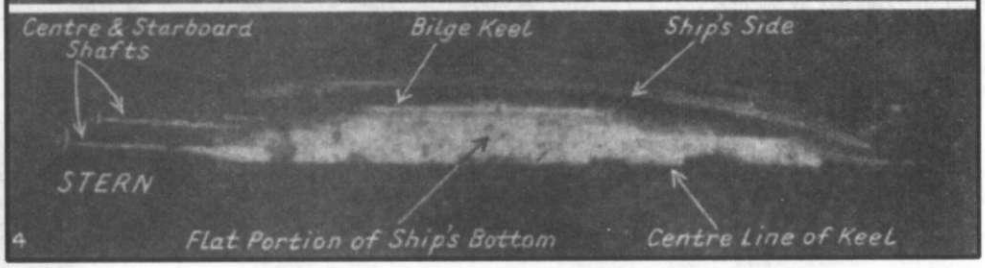


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**45,000-TON GERMAN BATTLESHIP TIRPITZ was sunk by the R.A.F. as she lay at her moorings in Tromsö Fjord, Norway, on November 12, 1944. The attack was made by 29 Lancasters with 12,000-lb. bombs. Several direct-hits were registered and within a few minutes the last great battleship of the German Navy capsized. Though this was the third attack with 12,000-lb. bombs, it was the first time in which the attackers enjoyed good visibility.**

**Shortly before 10.30 a.m., the force of Lancasters, led by Wing-Commander J. B. Tait, D.S.O., D.F.C. (5) and Squadron-Leader A. G. Williams, spotted the Tirpitz surrounded by an anti-torpedo boom (1). At 10.30 the ship was hit by at least three bombs and capsized (2). At 10.45 she was on fire (3). Reconnaissance showed that the battleship had overturned with about 700 feet of her keel sticking out of the water (4). The sinking was expected to have far-reaching effects on Allied strategy on the Scandinavian war-fronts.** **See facing page, and page 454.**

*Photos, British Official; Planet News*

# V.C. Awards Gained on Five Battle Fronts

**Capt. DAVID JAMIESON**

In command of a company of the Royal Norfolk Regiment which established a bridge-head over the Orne in Normandy during August 1944, Capt. Jamieson showed "superb qualities of leadership and great personal bravery" in repelling seven enemy counter-attacks, during 36 hours of hard fighting.

**Major ROBERT CAIN**

During the battle of Arnhem, Holland, in September 1944, Major Cain's company of the South Staffordshire Regiment was cut off and for six days was mercilessly harassed by the enemy. Although wounded, he helped to save "the whole situation of the airborne troops."

**Lieut. GERARD NORTON, M.M.**

On August 31, 1944, during the breaching of the Gothic Line in Northern Italy, alone and armed with a tommy-gun, Lieut. Norton, of the South African forces, took two enemy machine-gun posts, killing or taking prisoner the entire crews.

**C.S.M. PETER WRIGHT**

On September 25, 1943, near Salerno, Southern Italy, finding that there were no officers left, C.S.M. Wright took charge of his battalion of Coldstream Guards. Later, single-handed, he silenced three Spandau posts, and reorganized the troops.

**Major FRANK BLAKER, M.C.**

Posthumously awarded the V.C. for gallantry while leading his company in Burma in July 1944, Major Blaker, 9th Royal Gurkha Rifles, charged a Japanese machine-gun post, and although mortally wounded continued to encourage his men.

**Subadar NETRABAHADUR THAPA**

Commanding a platoon of the 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles in Burma, which—owing to his inspiration—defied heavy shelling and continuous attacks by vastly superior forces, in June 1944, Subadar Thapa held the position for eight hours and was eventually killed. He was found with his kukri in his hand and a dead Japanese by his side.

**Rifleman GENJU LAMA**

During fierce hand-to-hand fighting in Burma, in June 1944, Rifleman Lama, 7th Royal Gurkha Rifles, on his own initiative, with great coolness and complete disregard for his own safety, crawled forward and engaged three enemy tanks single-handed, killing or wounding the crews. He is seen (right) in hospital, receiving the congratulations and homage of his father and brothers.

*Photos, British and Indian Official, Lenare, G.P.U., Daily Mirror*

# Editor's Postscript

THERE is an interesting difference between the respect in which the German army commanders were held by us at the end of the war in 1918 and the general contempt that is felt for them now. When I say "us" I mean our leading soldiers and politicians and war correspondents. We knew how cleverly the Kaiser's generals had made their plans and how those plans had been beaten, not by better plans—at least not until Foch was appointed to the supreme command—but by sheer weight of numbers, when the Americans arrived in force in France, and by Allied superiority in the air. There was a feeling of almost sympathy with Ludendorff and the other prominent German leaders in the field. Now Hitler's yes-men, who are forced to do whatever this lunatic tells them, and who in consequence have had the most terrific defeats inflicted on their armies, are thought of as third-raters, men who have risen by flattering their crazy Fuehrer and who have during the last 18 months failed to hold the Allied forces in check. It is an instructive contrast, but we must not carry it too far. There is a lot of kick left in the enemy yet.

WHEN Sir John Anderson thanked God that some Home Guards whom he was reviewing had never been called upon to face the foe, he achieved a classic remark of the kind that "would have been better expressed differently." It must have reminded many people of the great Duke of Wellington's reflection, uttered aloud, when he saw the London volunteers who were raised in 1848—year of revolutions in Europe—for the defence of our shores. He took a look at them and walked away, saying "I don't know what impression they would make on an enemy but, by God, they terrify me!" Our present Chancellor of the Exchequer did not mean what he said about the Home Guard to be taken in that way. Nevertheless, we ought to be profoundly thankful that this force of local volunteers, so admirable in many ways, was not called on to offer organized resistance to an invader. I don't mean only because invasion would have been a terrible experience for us all, but because the slightly-trained and inadequately-armed part-time soldiers of 1940 could have put up only a temporary resistance (which was all they were meant to do) and would have been bound to suffer badly before the regulars could take over. So we must be thankful with Sir John Anderson that in those early days they did not have to stand up against professional battalions.

THE extension of murder tactics by Jewish terrorists beyond the borders of Palestine, where they have been carried on for a long time past, will have the unfortunate effect of still further lessening sympathy with the experiment of a "Jewish Home" in the Holy Land. To kill Lord Moyne was not only a cowardly crime: it was a gigantic stupidity. It may have very far-reaching results. Many have thought it was a mistake for us to entangle ourselves in the Palestine business at all. Why Lord Balfour suddenly decided in favour of it has never been fully explained. I have heard told that he asked in his innocent way, "Would all the Jews go there?" and was informed that this was the idea. Upon which he is said to have remarked with satisfaction "Then of course Lord Blank would go!" and to have agreed forthwith. It is also reported, I do not know how truly, that he asked shrewdly why, if the Jews wanted a National Home, they should not buy it in the ordinary way. That undoubtedly would have made their relations with the Arabs very much more satisfactory. The Arabs would not have the feeling that the immigrants have been foisted on them and that their country is no longer their own.

DOES Goebbels really know the first thing about mass psychology? It has always seemed doubtful, and now it appears to me to be proved that he does not, by the song he is trying to persuade young Germans to sing. Instead of giving them a martial air and stimulating sentiment, he sets to a dreary tune such words as:

We are marching in the footsteps
Of the dead heroes of youthful Germany.

and

The Lord God in his lovely heaven
Loves young soldiers who do not run away.

Germans are supposed by people who do not know them at home to be the most musical of nations, just because they happen to have had born among them in the past some of the world's greatest composers. Their failure to produce anything like a good marching song to compare with Pack Up Your Troubles, for example, or Roll Out the Barrel, not to mention Tipperary, shows that they either have no real heart in the war or lack musical ability to translate their emotions into song. Possibly both these explanations hold good.

WHILE the Princess Tsahai of Abyssinia was in this country during her father's exile, she occupied herself by doing good work in British hospitals and became imbued with the longing to establish one in her own country when it was freed from the hated Italians. Unhappily, soon after that occurred and the Emperor was able to go back with his family, the Princess died. Her great desire was unfulfilled. Now, however, it is to be carried out. I have had a letter from Lord Horder about the fund that is being raised for the purpose and of which he is the honorary treasurer. The aim is to collect £100,000, rather a substantial sum in these times. Already over £20,000 has been subscribed here, and £10,000 in Abyssinia. In addition, there is a sum of £13,000 with which the Emperor of Abyssinia started the fund. So nearly half the amount required is in hand. Anyone who would like to assist can do so at any branch of Barclay's Bank by paying into the account of Lord Horder, care of H. Reynolds and Co.

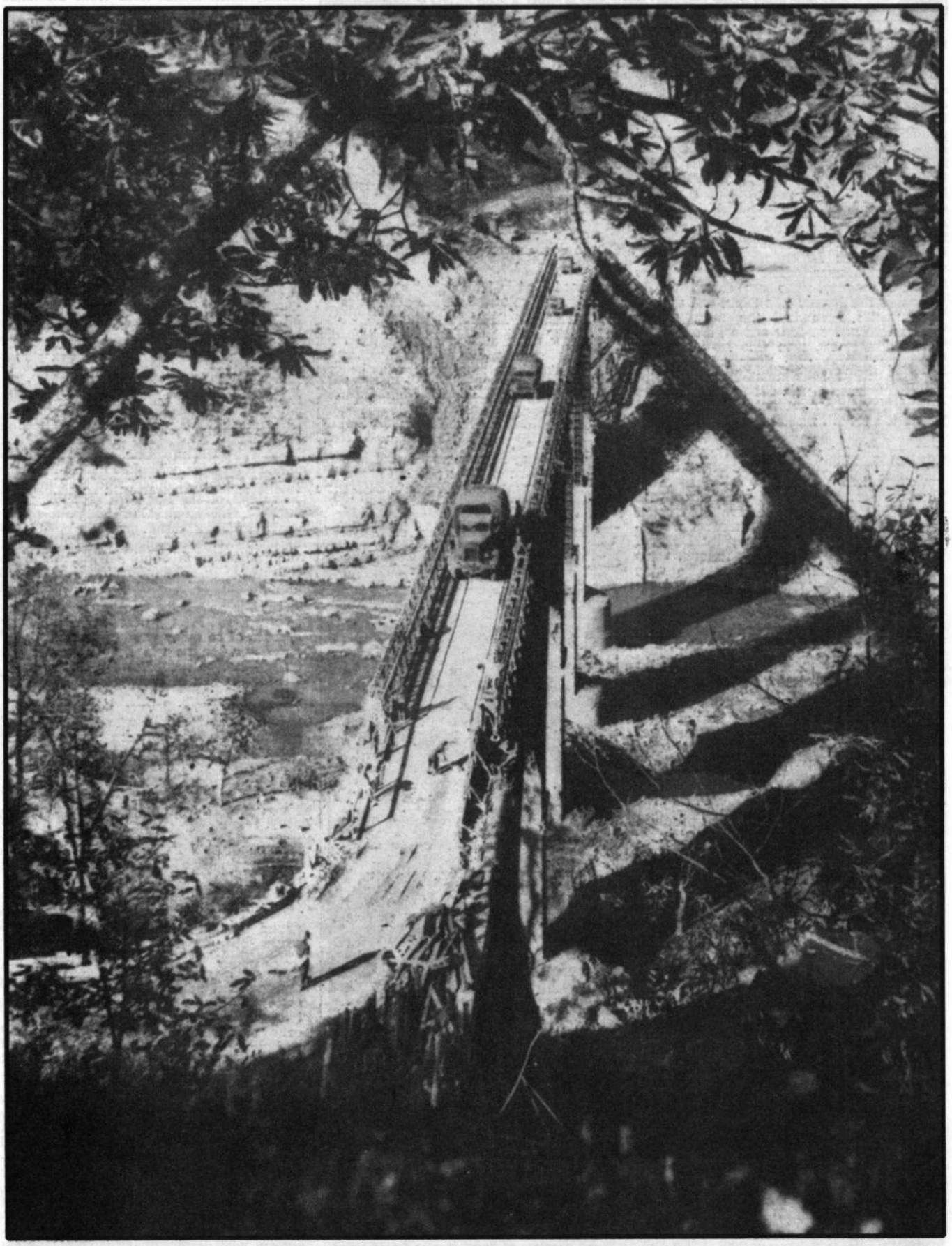
**Surgeon-Captain DOUGLAS MILLER, D.S.C., R.N.V.R., a former Harley Street specialist, who organized the medical operations in the heroic landings of Royal Marine Commandos at Westkapelle, Walcheren Island, Holland, on November 1, 1944. (See illus. pages 463-466.) An eye witness described his work on the beaches, in face of withering enemy fire, as "beyond all praise."** *Photo, Associated Press*

WHEN I met in the street a Civil Defence worker with "Warden" on his sleeve, I noticed on his face a melancholy look. I asked him what was the matter. He said "Nothing!" But I gathered in the course of a few minutes' talk that he was gloomy about the war soon coming to an end. He was thinking of the loss of his neat uniform; the consideration paid him by neighbours, the sense of exercising authority, the feeling that he was of some use to his country. After five years it will be hard to let all that drop off and to become once more just an ordinary citizen. I know of others who look forward to the end of the war with something like dismay. One is an oldish dug-out major who has had a cushy job since 1940 and thoroughly enjoyed himself. Another is a young signaller in South Africa, where he has revelled in sunshine for three years and does not at all look forward to the cold and damp and dullness of British weather. A third is an aged newspaper man who has returned to Fleet Street because of the absence of so many young men, and dreads the day when he will not be wanted any longer—not so much for the loss of salary but for the loss of occupation.

I WANTED a few flowers the other day to take to a little girl who is ill and loves gardens. I was asked six shillings each for chrysanthemum blooms. They were beauties, I grant you, but a small bunch would have cost one pound sixteen shillings. I asked if the shop had no cheaper flowers. I was told haughtily, "It does not pay us to sell anything cheap." Well, I could understand that. I was reminded of the man who went into a swagger fruit shop and asked for a basket of peaches. They were three and sixpence each (this was before the war, you understand) and there were five of them. He took the basket, put down a pound note, and turned to go. "Half-a-crown change, sir," said the shop-lady. "No, that's all right," he answered. "I trod on a grape." Are the buyers of chrysanthemums at six shillings apiece the same people who pay five or six pounds for bottles of champagne? Those who pay such prices must keep out of their minds the fact that numbers of their fellow-countrymen are going short of proper food and drink.

EVER since I can remember I have thought the private soldier's tunic very ugly about the neck. The stand-up collar of it spoiled the look of the old scarlet coats, and the khaki ones had just as slovenly an appearance. It is a good thing that an open neck is to be substituted and a collar and tie worn, as officers wear them. It will make a lot of difference in smartness and therefore in self-respect. I hear it was Field-Marshal Montgomery who decided that the change ought to be made and that his view prevailed over the stuffy War Office opinion that "it would make the privates look too much like officers." Very characteristic of both "Monty" and Whitehall!

# 5th Army R.E.s Spanned This 530-Foot Gap



**TAKING ENEMY DEMOLITIONS IN THEIR STRIDE,** Royal Engineers with the 5th Army in Italy built this Bailey Bridge near Valsava during heavy fighting below Bologna in the autumn of 1944. Nearly 80 feet high and spanning 530 feet, it was in use within a few minutes of completion, columns of heavy transport hurrying across it on their way up to the front line. Note the curious effect of the bridge's shadow in this photograph which emphasizes its height. **See also illus. page 169.**

*Photo, British Official*

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